SETTLEMENT OF THE NIPISSING PASSAGEWAY[1]

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INTRODUCTION

Exploration, discovery and settlement in North America have been profoundly affected by the location of lakes and rivers, among the most important of which are the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. Early in the 17th century, the French, who occupied the St. Lawrence Valley, discovered a practicable route to the Great Lakes. It led from the St. Lawrence up the Ottawa River to the Mattawa, up the Mattawa to Lake Nipissing, across Lake Nipissing and down the French River to Georgian Bay (Fig. 1). For over two hundred years, explorers, missionaries, and fur traders travelled this route to the west. In time, however, with the discovery of other routes and new modes of travel, it declined in importance, and by 1825 was nearly deserted.

The Canadian Shield, through which the historic highway passed, remained a barrier to the northward spread of settlement for many years after the route had ceased to be important. The shores of Lake Nipissing and of the Mattawa and French Rivers—the Nipissing Passageway—had failed to attract the thousands of early western travellers who saw them. After 1825 two small Hudson's Bay posts at Mattawa and Sturgeon Falls were the only centers of population. At last, toward the end of the nineteenth century, when lumbering and the building of a trans-Canada railroad attracted large numbers of men into the northland, enduring colonization within the region began, and by about 1880 the present pattern of farms, villages, towns, and roads had begun to form in the area.

The story of this colonization, in a land that had for nearly three hundred years resisted the encroachment of settlements, is told in the pages that follow.

Before the first French colonists came to North America, fishermen from France and Portugal regularly crossed the Atlantic to the shores of Canada. Normans and Bretons controlled the fishing grounds in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where there were rich harvests of cod-fish, seal, and walrus. During the long summer season, on their frequent visits ashore to find food and repair their vessels, the French sailors encountered Indians, from whom they obtained maize, some stone implements, and

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a quantity of furs, in exchange for a few glass beads, some cloth, or a steel knife. The white men learned, on their return to France, that the furs they had bought so cheaply could be sold at a profit among their countrymen. And the Indians, anxious to obtain more of the white man's trifles, assured the Frenchmen that great numbers of fur-bearing animals could be found along the lakes and rivers of the western forests. In this way Indians and white men began a profitable trade in furs which was destined to spread westward and to affect profoundly the course of North American history.

Fur traders came to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and with them explorers, missionaries, and colonists to occupy the land for France. Fortified posts were established, the first of which was Tadoussac, built in 1600 at the mouth of the Saguenay. Later, as the number of adventurers to New France increased, the principal fur post was moved up the St. Lawrence to Trois Rivières and then to La Chine, on the island of Montreal.

From their remote sources each spring, the tributaries of the St. Lawrence bore canoeloads of Indian hunters to the trading posts, with piles of beaverskins, and otter, marten, and muskrat furs. Down the Ottawa came Hurons, Nipissings, Ottawas, and other Algonquin tribes who hunted near the shores of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron. For these tribes the Ottawa-Nipissing route was the shortest and least dangerous between the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. Southward there were passages less difficult, though longer, that were known to the northern tribes, but the savage attacks of their enemies, the Iroquois, who lived on the shores of Lake Ontario, had made it unsafe to travel them.

It was from the northern tribes that Samuel de Champlain, arriving in New France in 1603 to search for a passage to China, heard of the upper St. Lawrence, the headwaters of the Ottawa, and a great western sea. Little was known of interior North America at this time, and Champlain resolved to set out as soon as possible for the west, and explore the Ottawa to its source.

It was not until 1610, however, that the first white man ventured to travel up the Ottawa. In June of that year, according to Champlain, a youth, Étienne Brulé, went with a band of Hurons who were returning to their hunting grounds. Brulé has left us no account of his travels, but we may assume from Champlain's record that he went up the river of the Ottawas, which was then known as La Grande Rivière, and crossed by Lake Nipissing to Georgian Bay.[1]

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[1]Butterfield, C. A., *History of Brulé's Discoveries and Explorations*, 1610-1626, Cleveland, 1898, pp. 15-20.

Five years later, in 1615, Champlain, with a small group of Frenchmen and the Recollet, Joseph LeCaron, joined a party of Hurons to follow the path of Brulé.[1] The written record of his observations and his map of 1632 provide the earliest account of travel up the Ottawa and across Lake Nipissing to the Great Lakes.

The Mattawa River, Lake Nipissing, and the French River, and their wooded shores, connect the River of the Ottawas with the Lake of the Hurons. This was the Nipissing Passageway (Fig. 1). With the Ottawa River it formed a canoe route between east and west that was travelled by missionaries, fur traders, and explorers for over 200 years.

FIG. 1

Settlement of the Nipissing Passageway began slowly. Of the numerous traders and missionaries who passed along its lakes and rivers, few were attracted to the land. By 1763, when French rule in Canada ended, not a single white man's cabin could be found, and only a few Indian families were living along the shores of Lake Nipissing and the French River.

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[1]Biggar, H. P., *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, Toronto, The Champlain Society, 1922, Vol. II, passim. Champlain made his first voyage up the Ottawa in 1613 as far as the present town of Pembroke. Discouraged by the Indians from going farther, he turned back.

Trading posts appeared for the first time in the Nipissing Area after 1783 when the Northwest Company, with headquarters at Montreal, was formed. Two of the posts endured and eventually became the foci of settlements which were later developed into the villages of Mattawa and Sturgeon Falls. As the fur trade expanded across the continent, however, the Northwest Company found itself unable to compete successfully with the Hudson's Bay Company that had been trading in furs for more than a century from its base at York Factory on Hudson's Bay. In 1821 the Northwest Company merged with the Hudson's Bay Company, and control of the fur trade in Canada was shifted to York Factory.

By 1825 Montreal had lost its importance as a fur depot, and the Ottawa-Nipissing canoe route became all but deserted. For thirty years a few Hudson's Bay Company canoes, sent to accommodate the diminished trade of Sturgeon River House and the post at Mattawa, brought the only regular travellers into the Nipissing Passageway.

During this period a new enterprise began to develop on the Ottawa. Timber was needed in Great Britain for ships, and the vast pine forests of northern Ontario and Quebec could amply supply the demand. As lumbering progressed in the Nipissing Passageway, a few settlers, assured of a ready market for the products of their farms, began taking up land in the Mattawa Valley. Thus the beginnings of agricultural settlement in the Nipissing Passageway were made under the influence of the lumbering industry.

However, in 1871 the Dominion census showed only 400 people living in the Nipissing Area, all in the vicinity of Mattawa. A new stimulus was needed to encourage migration from the fertile fields of southern Ontario into the northland of rock hills, forests, lakes, and rivers. It appeared in the form of two colonization roads, which, under the Dominion Land Policy, had been slowly stretching into the wilderness for several years. One of them, extending northward from the town of Rosseau on Rosseau Lake, had reached the village of Nipissing on the South River in 1874.

In 1875 another narrow wagon trail was completed to Mattawa, winding along the hilly banks of the Ottawa from the town of Pembroke. Still, for many years, the lands beyond Mattawa and Nipissing Village remained unclaimed by all but a few hardy pioneers.

Meanwhile the steel tracks of the Canada Central Railway[1] were advancing along the Ottawa toward the Nipissing Passageway. They reached Mattawa in 1881. A year later the first locomotive to pass

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[1]The Canada Central was amalgamated with the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1881. Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1883, No. 27n, p. 13.

along the shores of Lake Nipissing puffed to a stop at North Bay. By 1883 the rails of the Canadian Pacific had been extended beyond Lake Nipissing and in 1885 they completed the span of the continent. At intervals along the railroad, where construction camps, loading platforms, water towers, and storage sheds were maintained, the log cabins of villages appeared. Thus the first railroad to cross the Nipissing Passageway brought with it many of the present-day settlements.

Other railroads followed, and today two trans-continental lines and a trans-Canada motor highway cross this segment of the historic canoe route. The city of North Bay, the towns of Mattawa and Sturgeon Falls, and numerous rural villages have grown up along them. With the expansion of colonization that followed these beginnings, the present pattern of roads and settlements was developed, and now mixed farming, the cutting of timber for lumber and pulpwood, and an expanding recreation industry are the chief uses of the land.

PHYSICAL SETTING

In eastern Canada, from the frozen Arctic southward to Lake Huron, Lake Ontario, and the St. Lawrence, stretches a vast expanse of Archean rock called the Canadian Shield.[1] It is a region of lakes, rivers, marshes, forests, and thin soils, associated everywhere with rounded hills and ridges of exposed bed rock.

Where the Province of Ontario contracts to its narrowest width, the uneven surface of the Shield is interrupted by a shallow, irregular depression in which lie the lakes and rivers of the Nipissing Passageway. North and south of the Nipissing Passageway the irregular surface of the Canadian Shield rises to an elevation of more than one thousand feet above sea level. The indistinct borders of the enclosing upland are from three to four hundred feet higher than the depression below them. On the map, Figure 1, boundaries are shown between highland and low, based upon the eight hundred foot (conjectural) contour line. It may be observed, from the eastward extension of these boundaries, that the Ottawa Valley forms a continuation of the Nipissing Depression. Thus, between Georgian Bay and the St. Lawrence, a continuous channel may be traced, which is believed by geologists to have been the eastern outlet of an ancient system of lakes called the Nipissing Great Lakes.[2]

The land is rocky, rough, and thinly covered with stony soils. Wherever the roots of trees can obtain nourishment and support, pine, spruce, fir, maple, birch, and poplar are commonly found. The climate in which these plants develop is distinguished by long cold winters, cool summers, and about thirty inches of annual rainfall. The combination of physical elements: drainage, physiography, vegetation, and climate, has had a decided influence on the settlement of the Nipissing Area.

Drainage

The present drainage of the Great Lakes is separated from that of the Ottawa by a low divide between the Vase and the Mattawa Rivers. Into the Mattawa, Lake Nipissing, and the French flow nearly all the waters of the Nipissing Passageway.

The Mattawa, from its source in Trout Lake, follows a winding course among tree-clad hills of gneiss for over forty miles eastward to the Ottawa. For most of its length it is bordered on the north by high green hills that descend steeply to the water's edge, where there is an

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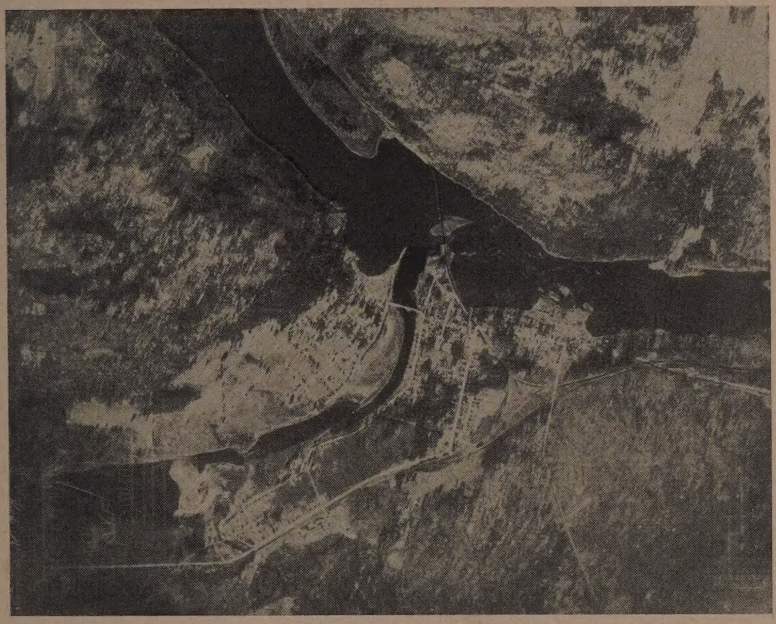
[1]The Laurentian Upland, Laurentian Plateau, Precambrian Shield.

[2]Taylor, F. B., "The Nipissing-Mattawa River, the Outlet of the Nipissing Great Lakes", *American Geologist*, Vol. XX, 1897, pp. 65-66.

intermittent fringe of narrow rocky beaches. The bordering hills to the south are wooded as well, but are lower, and slope more gradually to the water's edge.



R.C.A.F. Photograph

FIG. 2. The town of Mattawa. Junction of Mattawa and Ottawa Rivers at center. Trading post site is on the narrow peninsula projecting into the Ottawa from the left bank of the Mattawa. The main line of the Canadian Pacific may be seen passing south of the town, along the foot of the wooded hills on the lower right. A branch of the railroad passes through town and across the Ottawa, leading toward Lake Temiskaming. North toward top. Scale: about 4 inches to the mile.

The Mattawa is essentially a series of deep clear lakes, connected by narrow rocky channels, in which the water tumbles over rapids or waterfalls. The largest of the lakes is Trout Lake, draining eastward between constricted banks of sloping bed rock into Turtle Lake. From here the Mattawa descends over four miles of intermittent rapids and is joined by the North River before entering the second largest of the lakes, Lake Talon. At the eastern end of Talon, where it is joined by the Kaibuskong River from the south the Mattawa flows in a narrow canyon of

gneiss toward a forty-three foot fall of water called Talon Chute. Below this it expands slightly to form Pimisi Bay and then plunges once more over a long cascade into Bouillon Lake. This is a slender, twelve mile stretch of quiet water which empties over Des Roches, La Rose, and Epine rapids into a similar lake called Lac Plein Chant. Above Les Epines a large tributary, L'Amable du Fond River, joins the Mattawa from the south. For many years Lac Plein Chant has poured its waters over a ten foot power dam into a rocky channel in which the diminished stream flows toward the east. In the last half-mile of its course, the Mattawa curves northward before uniting its waters with the stately flow of the Ottawa (Fig. 2). Thus the Mattawa is fed by three main tributaries—the North River, the Kaibuskong, and L'Amable du Fond, and also by the waters of numerous creeks, like Blueseal, Boom, Patois, and Bouillon. It descends more than 160 feet, from Trout Lake to the Ottawa, over twelve separate cascades.

On the rocky banks abreast of each waterfall or rapid, there were, in the fur trade period, narrow portage trails and, in addition, there were often trails through the forest connecting one lake with another.

The portage over the height of land between Trout Lake and Lake Nipissing was the longest and most difficult in the Nipissing Passageway. French fur traders discovered that the most expedient of several trails used by the Indians led from Trout Lake along the marshy waters of La Vase Creek to its mouth.

Lake Nipissing occupies a shallow, irregular basin in the Laurentian bed rock. Its greatest length from east to west is about sixty miles, while from north to south its greatest width is sixteen miles. The northern and eastern banks are lined with sweeping sandy beaches between which are rounded points of bed rock. Its western and southern shores are for the most part bold, rocky, and deeply indented, and are screened in places by clusters of wooded islands. Reed-filled marshes occupy many of the shallow indentations along the western shores.

Lake Nipissing receives the drainage of four large rivers, the South, the Sturgeon, whose source is Lake Timagami, the Veuve, and the Amateewakea, besides the outflow of many small creeks. Chief among these are the Wistawasing, La Vase, Chippewa, La Ronde, Duchesnay, and Little Sturgeon.

Among the wooded islands that screen its southwest shore, the waters of Lake Nipissing pass slowly into the channels of the French River. Over the Chaudière Falls, Five Mile Rapids, Recollet Falls, and Les Dalles the stream gradually descends southwestward to Georgian Bay, sixty feet lower than Lake Nipissing. The land through which it flows is rocky and forested, becoming lower toward its mouth, and there sloping gently beneath the island-dotted waters of Georgian Bay (Fig. 3).

R.C.A.F. Photograph

FIG. 3. Main Channel outlet of the French River. The site of French River Harbor (left center) is along the left bank of the channel. A close inspection will reveal a number of buildings that mark the site. This photograph was taken in 1928. These buildings are no longer standing. The lighter portions of the land area are bedrock ridges, almost bare of vegetation, sloping gradually beneath the waters of Georgian Bay (bottom). North toward top. Scale: about 4 inches to the mile.

The French River is joined from the east by the Restoul, the Pickerel, and several smaller streams. From the north and west flow the Wahnepitei, the Murdock, and the Wolseley. The Pickerel and the Wahnepitei enter the French at Ox Bay, about seven miles upstream from the mouth of the main channel. West of Ox Bay the French River branches into four separate channels through which pours the drainage of nearly all the lands west of the Mattawa.

In addition to the waters of Lake Nipissing, the Mattawa, and the French, and their tributaries, the Nipissing Area is dotted with countless small lakes, ponds, and marshes having no apparent connection with the major drainage features.

Physiography

The uneven, rocky surface of the Nipissing Area is typical of the Canadian Shield. The essential features of this surface are massive knolls and ridges of exposed gneiss and granite, separating depressions of diverse size and form.[1]

FIGURE 4

[1]Its sculptured nature is the result of two main causes: 1) Fracturing of the crystalline bedrock; 2) Subsequent widening and rounding of the fissures by glaciation. Alfred, W. G., "The Laurentian Peneplain", *Journal of Geology*, Vol. XI, No. 7, Oct.-Nov., 1903, p. 659.

RCAF Photograph

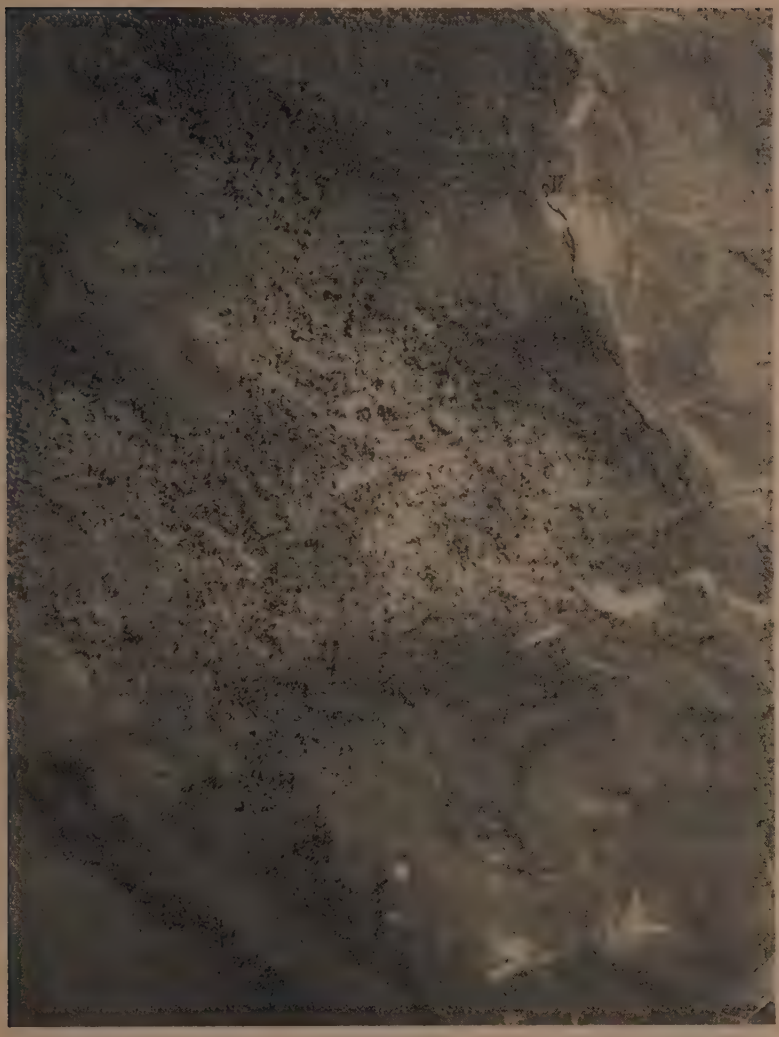
FIG. 5. Village of Warren. The farms here, as at Verner, have been established on deep deposits of varved clays, glacial till, and alluvium. The Canadian Pacific Railroad and the main highway between North Bay and Sault Sainte Marie pass along the southern edge of the village, north of the Veuve River. North toward top. Scale: about 4 inches to the mile.

FIG. 6. The well-kept buildings of a productive farm in the St. Charles farming area, about four miles northeast of St. Charles (see Figure 18). Wooded section on the left covers a low ridge of exposed bedrock.

In the Nipissing Passageway three major physiographic divisions are distinguishable: 1) Low Ridge and Knoll; 2) Hill-Valley; 3) Alluvial Lowland. It is evident, Fig. 4, that the Low Ridge and Knoll section is the most widespread, extending over all the lands west and south of Lake Nipissing, and appearing in outliers east and north of it. It is an uneven surface of low relief, distinguished by long rounded ridges and knob-like hills of red and gray banded gneiss and coarsely-crystalline granite. Between the hills and ridges, except where there is water, there are deposits of sand, clay, glacial till, peat, and muck. In many places these deposits extend for several acres, and where other conditions are favorable, they have been cleared for farms (Figs. 5 and 6).

The Hill-Valley area, bordering the Mattawa River, can be recognized by the presence of numerous wooded hills and broad valleys, having a difference in elevation of three to four hundred feet. Gneiss and granite bedrock underlie the surface everywhere. As in the Low Ridge and Knoll province, sand, clay, glacial till, peat, and muck are found here in pockets along the flanks of the hills (Figs. 7, 8, 9).

Extending from the lower reaches of the Sturgeon River is a small expanse of level land enclosed between Lake Nipissing and a low range of hills to the north. This is the Alluvial Lowland, an area of stratified gravel, sand, silt, and clay, reaching eastward from Cache Bay to La Ronde Creek. Most of the land here is poorly drained and is covered with a dense growth of low willows, birches, alders, poplar, spruce, and tamarack. In the vicinity of Sturgeon Falls many parcels of land have



RCAF Photograph

FIG. 7. Wooded hills typical of the Hill-Valley Province north of the Mattawa River. At the right is a tributary of the North River, and to the left of this stream are large, rounded hills, differing conspicuously from those of the Low Ridge and Knoll Province by their greater size and relief, and by the absence of exposed bedrock. Evergreen trees appear as the darker elements in the vegetation. North toward top. Scale: about 4 inches to the mile.

been cleared and drained sufficiently to produce crops, but elsewhere it remains for the most part choked with thickets of low trees and shrubs (Fig. 10).

Over these major physiographic provinces have lain the ice of prehistoric glaciers and the waters of ancient lakes. Scattered everywhere over the broken surface is a mantle of loose rock material, ranging from finely powdered clay to heavy gravel and boulders. These deposits are considered by geologists to be the result of glacial and lacustrine deposition.

Vegetation

From the frozen tundra of Arctic North America, the great coniferous belt of the Taiga reaches southward to the shores of the Great Lakes, and merges in a broad transition zone with the deciduous forests farther south. Spruce, fir, jackpine, and poplar are characteristic throughout the Taiga, while in the lower latitudes of this region are forests of maple, oak, pine and hemlock.

The Nipissing Area lies in the transition zone beween the Taiga and the deciduous forests south of it. The following trees are common to the area: white and red pine, sugar maple, red maple, hemlock, spruce, fir, birch, poplar, and jackpine. White pine, sugar maple, yellow birch, and hemlock tend to predominate over the other species, forming what ecologists call a forest climax.[1] Most of the mature trees in the area have been felled, however, and widespread forest fires have damaged many of the remaining stands. Nearly everywhere, on the cut-over, burned-over land, the fast-growing canoe birch (*Betula papyrifera*), poplar (*Populus tremuloides*), and cherry (*Prunus pennsylvanicum*) have sprung up where other species once grew, and beneath them gradually appear young spruce, fir and pine (Fig. 11).

The present composition of the plant cover consists in general of several distinguishable associations. On the slopes of the hills north of the Mattawa are mature stands of yellow birch and sugar maple. Scattered among them are white pine, hemlock, red oak, and beech, and on the sandy soils are groves of red pines (Fig. 7).

South of the Mattawa most of the original saw-log trees have been removed, and now, stands of immature pines, maples, and birches are found. Here, on the deeper soils, the hardwoods tend to predominate, while the shallow light soils are occupied by nearly pure stands of red and white pine.

In the scattered lowlands east of Lake Nipissing spruce and fir are usually dominant, and, with tamarack, fringe the low, moist borders of many lakes and rivers. On the alluvial borderlands of rivers, red

[1]Halliday, W. E. D., *A Forest Classification of Canada*, Ottawa, J. O. Patenaude, 1937, p. 31.

FIG. 8. A shallow, loam-filled valley about two miles southwest of Powassan. South River to the left, in the distance. Although the soils in the valleys of the Powassan farming area (see Figure 18), are generally fertile, those on the upper slopes, as on the right in the picture, are often sandy, and remain untilled pasture land.

FIG. 9. The buildings and boulder-strewn pasture of a farm about one mile southwest of Corbeil (see Figure 15). It is one of the better farms in this area of relatively low productivity.

maple, black ash, and American elm appear. This association is found in limited areas in the Nipissing Passageway wherever there are wet, low-lying river or lake deposits. For example, on Beaucage Point, along the banks of the lower Sturgeon, and in the valleys of the Veuve and South Rivers, red maple, black ash, and American elm are common.

On the rough surface of the Low Ridge and Knoll province, mixed stands of conifers and hardwoods are associated with the common cover of white birch and aspen. Beneath the tree cover, in the shallow pockets of soil, low juniper, huckleberry, and blueberry bushes grow luxuriantly. Near the mouth of the French River, jackpine is dominant, with a scattering of small birch, poplar, and maple. Fig. 12 shows the distribution of the dominant forest associations.

Many of the low swales in the Nipissing Passageway are covered by dense thickets of alder, willow, birch, and poplar. These moist depressions are frequently filled with cranberry or leatherleaf bushes.

From the above generalizations it is clear that the varied pattern of vegetation in the Nipissing Area is chiefly owing to diverse conditions of soil, drainage, and slope. The presence of its essential elements, however, is due to the influence of climate,—the average conditions of rainfall and temperature over a long period of years.

Climate

The transitional vegetation zone, in which lies the Nipissing Area, reveals the influence of two climatic regions. The climate of the Nipissing Passageway is transitional between that of the Boreal Forest and the deciduous forest region south of it.

Winters are long and cold, with an average temperature for January, the coldest month, of nine degrees Fahrenheit. Summers are short and cool. The warmest month, July, has an average temperature of sixty-five degrees Fahrenheit. The average annual precipitation amounts to thirty inches. The local variations from this general scheme become apparent from a study of Tables I and II. These climatic elements may be summarized in the Köppen classification system by the symbols Dfb.[1]

From November to May, the ground and the frozen surfaces of lakes and rivers are usually white with snow. As much as two feet commonly falls in a single month. Rivers and lakes often become winter highways for motor vehicles and sleighs. Bush trails through the forests are opened to the lumbermen in winter, when shrubs and trees are bare of leaves and the otherwise impassable trails become firmly packed with snow and ice.

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[1]Köppen, W., and Geiger, R., *Handbuch der Klimatologie*, Berlin, Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1938, Band II, Teil J. passim.

RCAF Photograph

FIG. 10. The Sturgeon River near its mouth. Farm clearings typical of the Alluvial Lowland appear in upper portion of picture. Lake Nipissing appears as dark area at bottom, McLeod Bay at left. Site of Sturgeon River House on right bank of the river at bend in upper portion. Fine, light-colored lines in the river are booms to control logs destined for lumber mills at Cache Bay or Callander. North toward top. Scale: about 4 inches to the mile.

FIG. 11. Regeneration of spruce and fir has begun under tall stands of birch and poplar. Photo shows a small expanse of cut-over, burned-over land south of the Mattawa River.

Summer precipitation occurs in the form of thundershowers and long steady rains that last for several days. The heaviest rainfall appears during the growing season, between May and October. The frost-free season varies considerably in length from year to year.[1] The last frost in spring may occur any time between the last week of May and the first week of June. Early frosts in autumn are not unusual, but the first frost normally appears around the middle of September. In some places of high elevation light frosts have been experienced during June and July. Variations from the average conditions are common, (Table III), depending upon the proximity to water, and the general qualities of the land.

In this physical setting the colonization of the Nipissing Passageway has taken place. It is reasonable to suppose that the countless lakes and rivers, the exposed bedrock, the pine, birch, and hemlock forests, and the cold climate have all had an important effect on the progress and present state of settlement.

THE FUR TRADE—1615 TO 1825

The fur trade in the Nipissing Area began in 1715 when Champlain and LeCaron journeyed up the Ottawa and across Lake Nipissing to the Great Lakes. Then, for more than two hundred years, explorers,

[1]Table III shows the record of first and last frosts in the growing season at three stations in the area for the ten-year period from 1930 to 1939.

missionaries and fur traders travelled this route to the west. By the end of the period, in 1825, trading posts had been established, and two of these, at Mattawa and on the Sturgeon River, became the first settlements in the Nipissing Area.

The headquarters of the fur trade was established at Montreal, with the founding of the city in 1641. From Montreal and the main artery of travel up the Ottawa, the French extended a far-reaching network of water highways into the forested region of the Great Lakes and beyond. The French had discovered that the Indian's birch canoe was eminently suited for travel on the lakes and rivers of the rocky, forested hunting grounds to the west, where the light craft could be carried from one lake to another, or past the many waterfalls and rapids that frequently obstructed the flow of rivers. Adventurous coureur-de-bois, and later, Recollet and Jesuit missionaries, adapted themselves to the use of the birch canoe and to the Indian's method of living in the wilderness, as they explored the forests far to the west.

The route of Champlain and LeCaron was shorter than those farther south, and it was safer for two good reasons. First, because it passed northward of the Iroquois country bordering Lake Ontario, and the headwaters of the St. Lawrence, where for many years savage Iroquois war parties had made it dangerous to travel. Second, because its narrow lakes and rivers were protected, for the most part, by high,

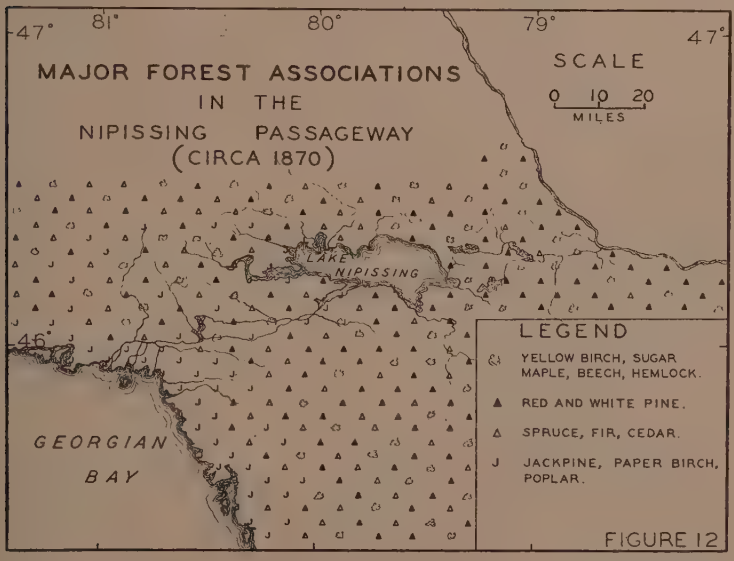

FIGURE 12

forested banks, from the strong winds which frequently made the open waters of Lake Ontario unnavigable for canoes.

Forts were erected at strategic points along the routes of the fur traders to secure the fur-laden canoes against the attacks of hostile Indians. Two of the less important forts are believed to have been built in the Nipissing Area,—on the main portage of La Vase Creek, and at the mouth of the Mattawa River. They were not maintained, however, after the fall of New France in 1763.[1]

Missions established by the French in the Nipissing Area also failed to endure. The Recollets began the mission of Saint Esprit among the Nipissing Indians in 1624. It was abandoned in 1629 when the members of this order were recalled from New France.[2] The Jesuits began a mission to the same tribe in 1640 and it was continued intermittently for nine years. No enduring settlement resulted, however, from the efforts of either group of missionaries.

The forts and missions established by the French during more than a century and a half of travel through the Nipissing Passageway had failed to inaugurate the colonization of the area, and at the end of the French regime in 1763, settlement had not yet begun.

For several years after 1763 only a few canoes passed along the Nipissing Passageway. Scotch and English merchants who had come to Montreal after the British conquest of Canada were at first unwilling to risk their fortunes in trade with Indians who had lately been allies of the French. By 1771, however, the first of the British traders had begun to send canoes up the Ottawa and through the Nipissing Passageway to the fur regions of the west.[3]

Montreal remained the center of the fur trade in Canada, from which the British rapidly extended their commerce over the routes previously established by the French. Many British traders, as competition among them became keener, found the costs of manning and outfitting canoes for long voyages into the interior, prohibitively high. A number of them, to avoid financial ruin, merged into partnerships, the most important of which was the Northwest Company, founded in 1783. This company became successful, not only throughout the former regions of French exploitation, but beyond them as well, extending a fur trade empire westward to the Pacific coast.

The financial headquarters of the Northwest Company was estab-

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[1]Voorhis, E., *Historical Forts and Trading Posts of the French Regime*, Ottawa, 1930, pp. 110 and 128.

[2]*Jesuit Relations*, Vol. I, Introduction, and Vol. LXXI, p. 126. The Recollets came to New France in 1615 at the request of Champlain. They were forced to leave in 1629 when the French colonies were surrendered to the English for three years.

[3]Voorhis, op. cit., p. 18.

lished at Montreal, while the main fur depot was shifted to Grand Portage on Lake Superior, and later to Fort William, at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River. Despite these changes, the Ottawa-Nipissing canoe route continued to be the most important avenue in the fur trade from Montreal.

The company introduced more intensive methods of fur-hunting, and built posts in areas once considered unimportant, wherever it was thought they would increase the harvest of furs. British forts were established in the Nipissing Area for the first time under this policy, at the mouth of the Mattawa, and along the Vase and Sturgeon Rivers (Fig. 1).

Mattawa House was founded at the confluence of the Mattawa and Ottawa Rivers, on a low point of land projecting between the two convergent streams (Fig. 2). It was begun around 1784 as a branch of the Temiskaming post 100 miles farther up the Ottawa on Lake Temiskaming, to supply local hunters and trappers and also to serve as a stopover on the routes through the Nipissing Passageway.

The narrow alluvial triangle where the log buildings were erected extends from the base of a range of wooded hills north of the Mattawa. The edge of a slightly elevated shelf of land, lying athwart the peninsula, afforded a favorable site for the trading post, where it was beyond the reach of high water in the spring. On the opposite bank of the Mattawa was a camping ground used by travellers who stopped to repair their fragile canoes, to trade at the post, or to camp overnight. The level terrace, on which the Indians and coureur-de-bois encamped, was crossed by a well-worn portage trail over which canoes and baggage were carried between the Ottawa and the Mattawa to circumvent the rapids at the juncture of the two streams.

The Northwest Company's Sturgeon River House was built about 1880 on the right bank of the Sturgeon River about two miles before it emerges from the north shore of Lake Nipissing (Figs. 1 and 10). The post was established at a point where the river ceases to meander across a low flood plain, and pursues a nearly straight course to the lake. Here the slow-moving stream was sheltered from strong winds which swept across the alluvial plain, by tall ash and maple trees fringing its low banks, thus affording protection to the fur-laden canoes which could glide safely along the calm surface to a landing within a few yards of the log trading post.

Although this post was about 20 miles north of the main line of travel between Mattawa and Georgian Bay (Fig. 1), it served as an important depot for furs gathered in the vicinity of Lake Nipissing and from the forested regions extending more than one hundred miles toward the north.

It will be recalled that the marshy waters of La Vase Creek (p. 11) provided the most convenient route for canoe travel between Trout Lake and Lake Nipissing. At the mouth of La Vase Creek, on its left bank, stood a solitary structure, called by the Northwest Company, Fort La Ronde. James J. Bigsby, stopping here in 1819, reports it "a decent, ordinary house, not stockaded, with a potato ground close to it, among marshes and gneiss mounds.[1]

Fort La Ronde was never an important trading center, although its location on Lake Nipissing at the mouth of the Vase, suggests that it functioned as a supply and repair station on the main canoe route between Mattawa and Georgian Bay. The site was later abandoned in favor of a small island off the north shore of the lake near the mouth of the Sturgeon River, its name having been changed to Nipissing House, and later, it was moved again to Dukis' Point, where it was abandoned altogether by 1856.[2]

Although the posts endured, the Northwest Company which founded them was destined to pass out of existence. Facing bankruptcy from costly competition with the Hudson's Bay Company, the Northwesters merged with their rivals in 1821. The Hudson's Bay Company acquired by the transaction all the material holdings of their former competitor, including forts and trading posts.

From the time of its founding in 1670 the Hudson's Bay Company had developed a monopoly of the fur trade over most of the lands draining into Hudson's Bay. The principal tributaries of Hudson's Bay had carried an increasing number of heavily laden York boats to the company's posts along the shores of the bay for many years. Control of the vast empire was centered at York Factory on its west coast.

After the union of the two companies, Montreal's importance as a fur trade center declined rapidly, for most of the furs from western Canada were then sent to the posts on the shores of Hudson's Bay. York boats, carrying furs down the Churchill, Nelson, Severn, Albany, and Moose Rivers to Hudson's Bay had replaced the birch canoes of the Northwest Company as the principal means of inland travel in the fur trade. By 1825 Montreal had completely lost its preeminence as a fur trade center to York Factory.

In the Nipissing Passageway, Sturgeon River House and the post at Mattawa were kept in operation by the Hudson's Bay Company. The valley of the Ottawa, however, no longer echoed to the shouting and singing of the *voyageurs*, and the lakes and rivers of the Nipissing Passageway were all but deserted. More than two hundred years had

[1]Bigsby, J. J., *The Shoe and Canoe*, London, 1850, 2 V., Vol. I, p. 165.

[2]Voorhis, E., op. cit., p. 128; Logan, W. E., *Canadian Geological Survey, Report*, 1853-56; Plans, No. 8; Author's Field Notes.

passed since Champlain and LeCaron first crossed Lake Nipissing. Since that time, many hundreds of French and British traders had travelled through the Nipissing Passageway. When the fur trade period ended in 1825, the settlement of the area had begun, with the two small trading posts at Mattawa and Sturgeon Falls.

LUMBERING—1825 TO 1881

Although the first population centers had been established by 1825, the earliest enduring agricultural settlements were brought to the Nipissing Passageway by the lumbering industry during the period that followed. Logging operations had begun far down the Ottawa in 1806, after which the search for timber was rapidly extended westward up the valley into the forested regions of virgin pine, birch and maple. By 1835 the Ottawa timber trade had reached the mouth of the Mattawa, and about twenty years later the first lumber camp appeared in the Nipissing Passageway.

Colonization from the lower Ottawa and St. Lawrence valleys followed slowly the advance of the lumbermen. Nevertheless, not long after logging operations were begun in the Nipissing Area, a few settlers arrived to take up homesteads. The assurance of a market for oats, hay, and potatoes at the lumber camps induced a number of colonists

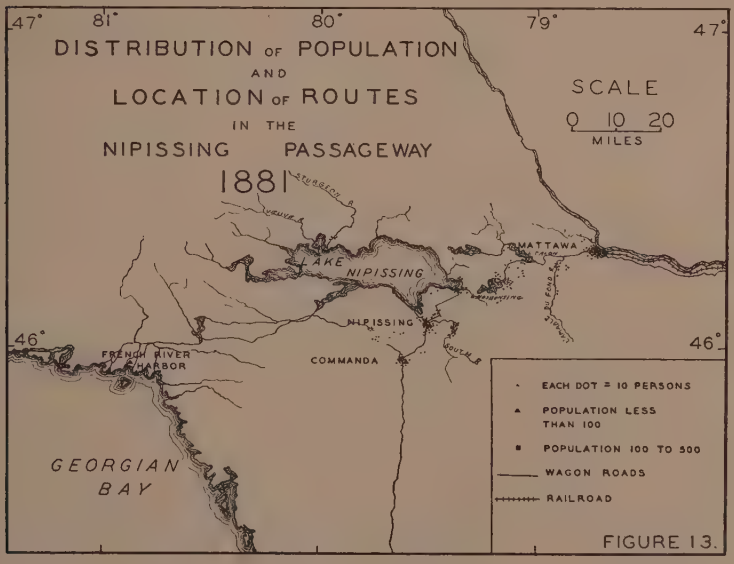

FIGURE 13.

to begin farming around Mattawa, Lake Nosbonsing, Lake Talon, and South River (Fig. 13), before 1870. To encourage the settlement of undeveloped lands in Northern Ontario, the provincial government built two colonization roads into the area in this period, one of which was constructed along the southern bank of the Ottawa, and was completed to the village of Mattawa in 1874. The other led north from Rosseau Lake to the village of Nipissing on the South River, and was completed in 1875. By the end of the period in 1881, the lumbering industry was progressing rapidly, and the expansion of agricultural settlement in the Nipissing Passageway had begun.

The Ottawa River, largest tributary of the St. Lawrence, drains a forested area of more than 56,000 square miles, most of which lies in the Laurentian Upland of Ontario and Quebec. In the first half of the 19th century the basin of the Ottawa and its adjoining lands became the most important region of forest exploitation in eastern Canada, and the Ottawa River was for many years a busy thoroughfare in the transportation of timber.

In 1800 the trees which dominated the virgin forests of this vast territory were pine, hemlock, birch and maple. Of these, the timber merchants preferred the pines for their great height and girth, and the qualities of their wood. When lumbering was begun on the Ottawa in 1806, it was thought that the supply of red and white pine was inexhaustible, and only the largest and best trees were taken. At this time, and for many years to follow, the building needs of Great Britain's industries and expanding navy provided a ready market for Canada's timber. In the naval building program especially, long straight timbers were required, light, yet strong and durable enough for masts, yardarms, and deck planking. Lumber from the red and white pines admirably satisfied these requirements.

The numerous streams forming a network of drainage into the Ottawa became an important factor in the development of lumbering in the Ottawa Valley. Because the pine logs would remain afloat for long periods, they could be driven down the smaller tributaries to the Ottawa, and then be transported in rafts to the St. Lawrence, and on to the main lumber port of Quebec. It was natural therefore, that logging operations became inseparably associated with the streams and lakes draining into the Ottawa River. It was thus, with the passage of time, that the Mattawa played an increasingly important role in the timber trade of the Ottawa, for the forested hills through which it flowed, as well as those bordering Lake Nipissing and the French River, were found to bear many dense stands of red and white pines, Fig. 12.

The first logging camp or *chantier* appeared about 1855 in the Nipissing Passageway. It was erected on the right bank of the Mattawa

a short distance above Paresseux Falls. The only settlement in the area at that time, besides the Hudson's Bay posts at Mattawa and Sturgeon Falls, was a single log cabin at the mouth of the Mattawa on the bank opposite the trading post. After 1855 the number of timber operators in the Nipissing Area increased each year. Around 1860 logging camps appeared on Antoine Creek, L'Amable du Fond River, Lake Nosbonsing, and Talon Lake. Still the area of settlement had expanded only slightly,—chiefly along the alluvial terraces near the mouth of the Mattawa River, for there was little inducement at that time for the bush workers to remain in the forest wilderness the year 'round. Trees were felled in winter time and rafted down the Ottawa in spring. Thus, every autumn a large number of men arrived at Mattawa, made their way into the forests, worked all winter at the logging camps, and then joined the annual spring drive down the Ottawa.

The village of Mattawa during the lumbering period expanded rapidly along the left bank of the Mattawa River, southward and westward from the trading post site (Fig. 2). An Oblate church and school were erected on the left bank and these became the center of the community. In a few years the log cabins of the tiny village had begun to crowd against the wooded hills which lie close to the north shore of the Mattawa. With the continued growth of the settlement, log cabins and hotels were built on the south bank of the Mattawa, and in 1877 the two parts of the village were connected for the first time by a bridge.[1]

To-day the main administrative, business, and residential sections of Mattawa occupy the south bank of the river. Here are located the town hall, the post office, two Protestant churches, most of the trading establishments, and a large residential area. Across the river, in the older part of town, the Roman Catholic church and school have remained, and many of the log cabins which formed part of the original settlement may still be seen.

In 1864 the township of Mattawan was surveyed, and the surveyor's records suggest the extent of settlement around Mattawa at that time.[2] "There are already at the Fort a large Catholic chapel, two good hotels, a Hudson's Bay Company general store, and on the Antoine, a couple of miles distant, Mr. McConnel's sawmill. The nearest post office at present is the Joachim, to which place there is a weekly mail from Ottawa. . . . There is as yet no grist mill, the high prices for hay and oats leading the few settlers there are to cultivate hardly anything else;

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[1]Buies, A., *L'Outaouais Superieur*, Toronto, 1889, p. 109.

[2]Kirkwood, A. and Murphy, J. J., *The Undeveloped Lands in Northern and Western Ontario*, Toronto, 1878, p. 166.

it being more profitable to buy flour for their own use and devote all their land to growing the beforementioned crops." The chapel referred to here was erected in 1864 by the Oblate fathers who had been visiting Mattawa regularly since 1836. The two hotels were newly built at the time of the survey to accommodate some of the woodsmen and their employers during the busy fall and winter seasons of the timber trade The post office at Joachim was situated at Joachim Rapids, some sixty miles down the Ottawa.

The surveyor's account of the leading crops raised in the area, and the high prices paid for them, indicates the close relationship that was developing between colonization and lumbering. Oats, hay, potatoes, and meat were the chief farm products needed at the lumber camps, and it was a difficult and costly matter to transport these bulky commodities from the farms along the lower Ottawa and St. Lawrence.

Efforts were made by the lumber merchants to establish depot farms near their lumber camps, and otherwise to supply the necessary products of the farm to the men and animals in their employ. These efforts were unsuccessful in lowering prices, however, and they continued to bring in supplies from farms far down the Ottawa Valley at high cost. An opportunity was thus created for enterprising colonists to clear land and raise crops to sell at a high profit to the *chantiers*.[1] By the time the township of Mattawan was surveyed in 1864, a few shantymen and a small number of adventurous settlers from southern Ontario and Quebec had begun to take up farm land along the Mattawa River. Most of the new colonists devoted their lands to the raising of crops, for they were unable to take advantage of the good market for meat products, at least before the arrival of railroads, because of the high cost and difficulty of transporting cattle, sheep and hogs to their farms. In later times, however, livestock-raising became the leading occupation of farmers in the Nipissing Area.

The pioneer farmers were able to earn money in winter by working for the timber operators in the bush, and thus by combining a wintertime occupation with summertime farming, they were able to make a satisfactory living on the relatively poor land in the Nipissing Passageway. To this day the majority of farmers in the area work in the bush during the winter months to supplement their incomes.

The westward movement of settlers in the Nipissing Area was seriously handicapped for many years by the lack of roads. In spite

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[1] "The farmer who follows in the wake of the lumberman finds . . . in the wants of the latter, a steady demand for all he produces, at a price not only equal to that procurable in the ordinary marts, but increased by the cost of transport from them to the scene of the lumbering operations." Kirkwood, A. and Murphy, J. J., op. cit. p. 15.

of this drawback, the limits of settlement were pushed farther and farther westward by pioneers who explored the forests for new homesteads by travelling in canoes on the lakes and rivers. In 1865 John Beatty arrived at Mattawa, and following the historic route of the fur traders, proceeded by canoe up the Mattawa to Lake Nipissing, and thence up the South River to the first waterfall. On the right bank of a small creek that enters the South River at this point, he set up a temporary shelter and began clearing the land. In the neighborhood of Beatty's farm a small colony began to develop a few years later, called Nipissing Village (Fig. 13). Thus, by 1865, the settlement of the Nipissing Passageway had extended westward to the land south of Lake Nipissing. Still, during the next ten years, most of the settlers from the Ottawa Valley took up land east of Lake Nipissing and south of the Mattawa River, for this was the chief area of lumbering activity, and settlement remained closely allied with the timber trade.

The first official census giving population figures for the lands in the Nipissing Area in 1871, indicated that there were 400 people living in the area at that time.[1]

That summer a coach service was inaugurated between Mattawa and Deux Rivières. The weekly coach followed the line of the unfinished colonization road which extended westward from Pembroke along the south bank of the Ottawa. The road was completed in 1874 but was used more by lumbermen and the public coaches than by incoming settlers.

A colonization road, extending northward from Rosseau Lake, reached the South River near John Beatty's farm in 1875, giving rise to a new center of population expansion which soon acquired the name of Nipissing Village. The township of Nipissing, in which the village lies, was surveyed in 1874, and at that time its total population was included in nine families who were living along Beatty Creek, which joins the South River four miles from its mouth. Three years later, in 1877, the settlement had expanded noticeably, and included a small sawmill, a grist mill, a post office and public school. Two hotels were built at the village a short time later to accommodate the growing number of colonists from the south. Thus, for a few years, Nipissing Village was a busy terminal on the colonization road, and its population increased to almost 300. Later, when a railroad was built northward from Gravenhurst, it lost its importance and the population declined. Nipissing Village, whose population is now around 200, has never become an important center of settlement chiefly because of the scarcity of arable land around it (See pages 102-103). However, it remained for many years

[1]Canada, Department of Agriculture, *Census of 1870-71*, Ottawa, 1873-78, Vol. I.

an important stepping off point for pioneers who developed the settlements of Powassan, Callander, North Bay, and Sturgeon Falls.

By 1881 branch roads had been extended by the provincial government from Nipissing Village to a small settlement on Southeast Bay (Callander), and eastward toward Powassan. From Commanda, twelve miles south of Nipissing Village, roads were also built toward the east into Himsworth Township, and north-westward toward the village of Restoul.

From 1875 until the end of the lumbering period, colonization of the Nipissing Passageway expanded from the two population centers at Nipissing Village and Mattawa. By 1878, however, lumbermen from the Georgian Bay area had begun to drive timber from Lake Nipissing down the fifty mile course of the French River to Georgian Bay. This was the beginning of a long period of timber drives down the French River, which resulted in the founding of the small lumber fort of French River Harbor around 1880 (Figs. 3 and 13), on the east bank of the main channel, one mile north of Georgian Bay. This was the only settlement, consisting at that time of docks for the steam tugs and a few frame dwellings, established along the French River in the period 1825 to 1881.

During the lumbering period, logging operations almost invariably preceded the settlement of undeveloped areas in the Nipissing Passageway. From Nipissing Village, settlement was encouraged by the construction of colonization roads into the bush, but elsewhere in the area, pioneer travel was undertaken during those years without the advantage of government-built roads. Travellers from Mattawa made their way in boats or canoes along the Mattawa River and its tributaries, or laboriously drove their wagons over the narrow bush trails of the lumbermen. On Crooked Chute Lake, Sharpe's Creek, Lake Nosbonsing, and Lake Talon small settlements were begun by these means, which later formed the nuclei of population centers south of the Mattawa.

Very often, during the last few years of the period, a lone pioneer struck out into the forest before the advance of the lumbermen. Thus in 1880 we find single families living in isolated clearings on the banks of the Pickerel and Restoul Rivers, and near the north shore of Lake Nipissing (Fig. 13), surrounded by forests of virgin pine, birch, and hemlock. The townships of Springer and Caldwell, on the north shore of Lake Nipissing near the Sturgeon River, were occupied by homesteaders at least as early as 1879.

The distribution of population in the Nipissing Passageway, according to the census of 1880-81 is shown on the map (Fig. 13) with modifications and additions based upon surveyors' reports and official government records of that time. The principal elements in the settlement of the area were the two villages of Mattawa and Nipissing Village, and numer-

ous scattered farms and logging camps. In addition, on the southeast bay of Lake Nipissing and at the east end of Lake Nosbonsing, were two small clusters of population which later became respectively the villages of Callander and Bonfield. The tiny lumber port of French River Harbor, surrounded by an expanse of bare, rocky, and uninviting ridges, was destined to be abandoned in later years when lumbering activity on the French River ceased (See page 109).

At the close of the period 1825-1881 the distribution of population in the Nipissing Passageway corresponded closely with the areas of logging operations. This correlation was chiefly due to the mutual economic advantages enjoyed by lumbering and farming on the frontier lands of the area. The successful introduction of agricultural settlement in this period had depended upon the presence of an accessible market for the few crops which could be harvested from the scattered patches of good soil. Hence the increase in settlement in the Nipissing Area, from a few employees of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1825, to a year 'round population of about 2300 in 1881 (Fig. 13) was mainly owing to the development of lumbering in the area.

RAILROADS—1881 to 1891

In the decade between 1881 and 1891 the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad through the Nipissing Passageway resulted in a marked increase in the population of the area. By 1883 its rails had passed westward beyond the Nipissing Area, and in 1886 it was joined at La Vase Creek by the Northern and Pacific Junction Railroad, extending northward from Gravenhurst.

Along the new railroads, where stations, water towers, and other facilities were erected, the log houses of the pioneers began to appear, some of which became the centers of towns and villages, while others, in time, disappeared. Subsidiary routes were connected with the railroads, and farms were established around the new communities wherever pockets of arable land could be found. At the close of the period the foundations of the modern road system and the present pattern of settlement had been established. By 1891 the population of the Nipissing Area had increased to nearly 12,000, most of which was distributed along the railway lines and the newly-built wagon roads. In addition, some settlements had begun to expand around farms and logging camps far removed from the main routes of travel (Fig. 14).

Along the southern bank of the Ottawa River, the Canada Central Railroad was extended to the village of Mattawa in 1881. During the next two years this railroad, which was absorbed by the Canadian Pacific in 1881, was continued westward as far as the present city of Sudbury.

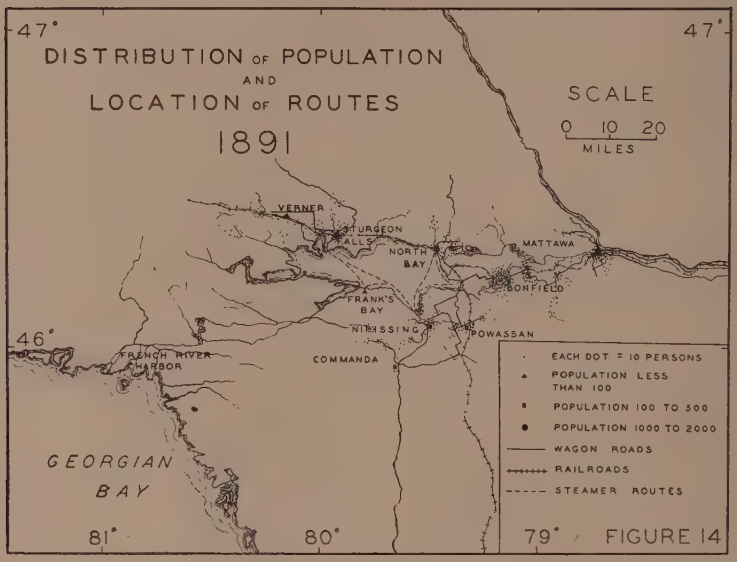

FIGURE 14

The difficulties of building the Canadian Pacific across an uninhabited, uncleared, and irregular terrain were offset somewhat by the presence of an inexhaustible supply of timber, sand, gravel, and boulders for construction materials. The dense forests which yielded red and white pine to the lumbermen, provided the railroad builders with hemlock and jackpine for ties, oak and other hardwoods for bridges. Sand, gravel, and boulders were obtainable from the scattered pockets of glacial till and outwash which are present throughout most of the Nipissing Area.

In the forests through which the railroad was constructed, were occasional large clearings, made by lumbermen and settlers during the previous period of lumbering. The widespread felling of trees and the careless use of fire had led to an appalling spread of forest fires which had laid waste thousands of acres of woodland throughout the Nipissing Area. Coniferous trees, because of their highly inflammable needles and pitch, were especially vulnerable to forest fires. Indeed, surveyors often observed that the charred areas of land were bounded by stands of hardwood trees whose trunks and leaves had resisted burning. The wide expanses of burned-over land were given the name *brûlé* by the French-Canadians who worked at the logging camps, and the word is often heard to-day in the same usage. Everywhere that fire spread through the land, a dense cover of white birch, poplar, and wild cherry sprang up.

When the Canadian Pacific was extended into the Nipissing Passageway, Mattawa was the only village on the line it eventually followed toward the west (Fig. 13). By 1883, when it reached beyond Lake Nipissing, new settlements had appeared along the route, at Crooked Chute Lake, Sharpe's Creek, Lake Nosbonsing, La Vase Creek, Lake Nipissing, Sturgeon River, and Veuve River.

At the eastern outskirts of the present town of Mattawa, the Canadian Pacific curves away from the Ottawa, passing south of the town, along the foot of a rocky, wooded slope (Fig. 2). The high, steep banks of the Mattawa River precluded the establishment of a right-of-way near it, and instead, the most practicable route was discovered to wind circuitously through the valleys of its tributaries (Fig. 14).

West of Mattawa the roadbed pursues a winding course along the lower slopes of the forested hills, skirting the shores of numerous small lakes and swales, and gradually rising in elevation until it crosses L'Amable du Fond River, where it turns sharply southward and passes close to the shore of Crooked Chute Lake, about eleven miles from Mattawa. Where the waters of Smith Lake pour into the Crooked Chute, through a narrow rocky defile, a sawmill was built about 1880, to provide lumber for the settlers in the surrounding area. When the Canadian Pacific was built along the shores of these lakes in 1881-82, the tracks were laid within a hundred yards of the mill, on the opposite bank of the channel. The sawmill supplied lumber for many needs of railroad building, and it soon became the center of a busy construction camp. A station was erected near it, and the small community named Eau Claire, which developed in the vicinity, was thus established.

Colonists who stopped at Eau Claire found the rocky countryside unsuitable for farming, and many of them moved up the fertile valley of L'Amable du Fond to establish their farms. Several years after the period of railroad building ended, the community center of Eau Claire was shifted to a crossroads two miles south of the station, closer to the heart of the agricultural area (Compare the maps, Figs. 14 and 15). Here it has remained until the present day, where a school, general store, and post office are the main elements in the community structure. Near Eau Claire station a cattle-loading ramp has been built, but the sawmill and construction camp were removed long ago.

About six and a half miles beyond Eau Claire, the railroad crosses Sharpe's Creek, having gained an elevation of 227 feet above the station at Mattawa. Between Sharpe's Creek, Blue Seal Creek, and the Kaibuskong River is a broken expanse of fertile clay-loam soil, indistinctly merging with the sandy soils on the rising slopes of the Nipissing Depression (Fig. 1), to the south. Pioneers had taken up land near Sharpe's Creek as early as 1875, and a Canadian Pacific station was

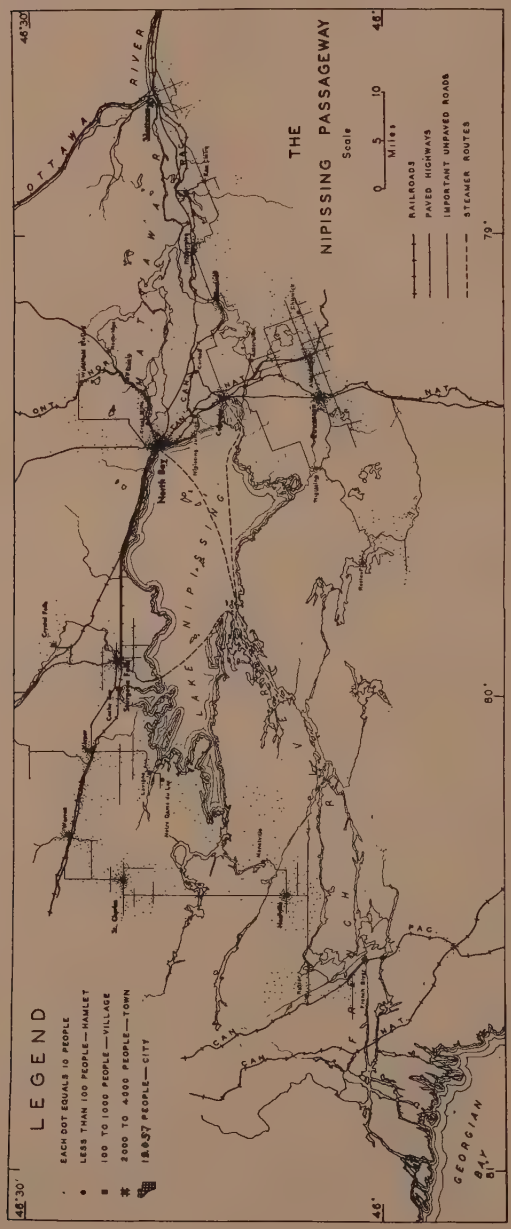

FIG. 15. Distribution of population and positions of routes—1949.

erected near the promising settlement after trains began running regularly along the line in 1882. Later the station was moved to its present site at Rutherglen (Fig. 15), three hundred yards east of Sharpe's Creek, where a cattle-loading platform, general store, post office, and two churches form the nucleus of the modern village.

Several miles southwest of Rutherglen, at the foot of Lake Nosbonsing, the David Moore Lumber Company had erected a camp in 1861, from which they conducted logging operations on the shores of the lake. Settlers established farms on the fertile patches of land near the site of Moore's camp, and by 1875 a small community named Callander had developed around the foot of the lake. The name of the settlement was later changed to Bonfield (Fig. 15), distinguishing it from the colony on Southeast Bay (Lake Nipissing), which had also acquired the name Callander. The latter place is the modern village of Callander made famous in recent years by the Dionne family.

In 1884 the J. R. Booth Lumber Company built a railroad beween the mouth of the Wistawasing River and the head of Lake Nosbonsing. Logs were hauled out of Lake Nipissing by means of a decking ladder, loaded on flatcars and transported by rail for six miles up the valley of the Wistawasing to Lake Nosbonsing. Here they were rolled into the water and towed by steamer across the lake to the Kaibuskong River, where they were driven down the rapids to the Mattawa.

Bonfield became an important trading center for the lumbermen because of its position beside the Canadian Pacific Railway and at the head of the Kaibuskong River. Years later, when the lumbering industry declined around Lake Nosbonsing, the village lost its importance and became the quiet center of a farming district which it has remained to the present day (Fig. 16).

The Canadian Pacific crosses the Kaibuskong at Bonfield, following the irregular shoreline of Lake Nosbonsing westward for about four miles, after which, turning northward, it eventually gains the banks of La Vase Creek. Passing along the north bank of this stream, it gradually turns northwestward to touch the shore of Lake Nipissing near the outlet of Chippewa Creek. The railroad had reached this point n 1882.

Settlers who travelled the Canadian Pacific during the next few years found the countryside it traversed west of Lake Nosbonsing unattractive for farming. In time, however, a small amount of fertile land was discovered between the line of the railroad, Lake Nosbonsing, and Southeast Bay, and by 1891 a number of farms had been established in that section.

To serve the needs of the scattered colony, stations were built along the Canadian Pacific at two points between Bonfield and Lake Nipissing,

where hotels, stores, and post offices soon appeared, and for a brief time were the centers of colonization. Three miles west of Bonfield, where the railroad turns away from the lake, a tiny hamlet called Nosbonsing was founded which became the center of an expanding rural community north and west of it. From the lakeshore a few yards below the station colonists were able to reach all points on the shores of Lake Nosbonsing by boat, before roads were constructed to permit travel into the area by land. The settlement declined when roads were built from Bonfield and the colonization centers near Lake Nipissing. Hotels and stores were ultimately abandoned, and the post office was discontinued in 1937, when only a few families remained near the village site.

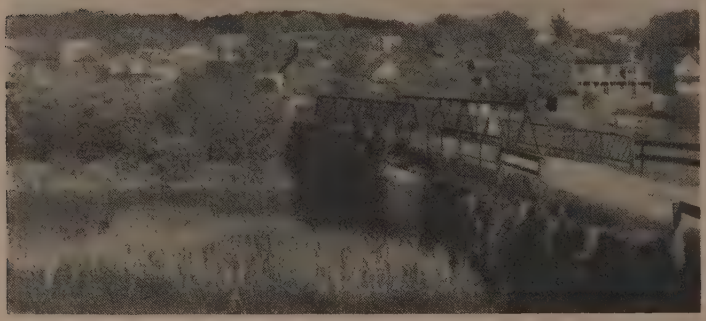

FIG. 16. Village of Bonfield. View eastward across the head of the Kaibuskong River, toward the center of town. Past this point the Kaibuskong once bore timbers from Lake Nosbonsing (to right of photo) eight miles downstream to the Mattawa.

Nine and one-half miles beyond the village of Nosbonsing, on the banks of La Vase Creek, Thornecliff station, established as a supply depot and construction camp for the advancing railroad, experienced a like development and eventual decline. To-day, the site of this once busy frontier village is occupied by a few farms and the decaying remains of habitations that once housed its pioneer colony. Throughout the Nipissing Area not a few of the original settlements have enjoyed a similar brief period of importance, only to be abandoned later when their populations were attracted to more favorable situations.

In 1882, when the first Canadian Pacific engine crept along the newly-laid tracks across Chippewa Creek, a solitary cabin occupied the

RCAF Photograph

FIG. 17. Sturgeon Falls. The cascade after which the town is named is in the center of the picture (The Canadian Pacific Railroad crosses the river at the foot of the falls). A large pulp mill is on the right bank at center of picture. Above the mill are two rafts of logs. Those on the left are destined for the pulp mill. Those on the right will pass down the flume (center) to the lower Sturgeon (see Figure 10), and thence to Lake Nipissing. North toward top. Scale: about 4 inches to the mile.

site of modern North Bay. The railroad men chose this site as a major divisional point on the transcontinental line to the west, where a roundhouse, coal depot, repair station, and other facilities were established. The expansion of the city, on the bare rock and thin soils west of Chippewa Creek, is chiefly the result of its increasing importance as a railroad center.

West of North Bay the railroad right-of-way lies along the north shore of Lake Nipissing, a few yards above the water level. Beyond La Ronde Creek the tracks were laid in a straight line due west for twelve miles, upon a road bed built well above the moist alluvial lowlands it traverses (Fig. 14). The railroad rises only a few yards before crossing the Sturgeon River, twenty-four miles west of North Bay, turning slightly to the right as it passes along the head of McLeod Bay.

The Canadian Pacific crosses the Sturgeon River at the foot of a steep cascade, about two miles upstream from the site of the Hudson's Bay trading post (Figs. 10 and 17). By 1880 settlers had begun to build log cabins along the river, near the trading post and around the foot of the falls, where a general store had recently been built. In a few years a town plot was surveyed around the settlement, for its site and situation seemed favorable for the development of industries. The waterfall was a source of power for future sawmills and gristmills, while the intersection of the Canadian Pacific railroad with the water route of the Sturgeon suggested that a transportation center might be developed. By 1891 Sturgeon Falls had, in fact, become an important trade and transportation center for the newly-settled areas along the northern and western shores of Lake Nipissing. It gained further importance during the following period when a large pulp mill was constructed at the falls.

West of the Sturgeon River the Canadian Pacific passes along the head of McLeod Bay, a few miles beyond which it turns northwestward to a bend in the Veuve River, following the north bank of this stream for nearly thirty miles (Fig. 14). The tracks were laid along the Veuve in 1883, on the deep varved clays, glacial till and outwash, which fill the valley.

About one and one-half miles beyond the point where the railroad reaches the Veuve, the present village of Verner was established as a stopping place when the tracks were laid. Nine miles west of Verner, another railroad stop, called Veuve Station, was erected, which later became the village of Warren (Fig. 5). Settlers at Sturgeon Falls and North Bay soon learned about the promising fertility of the fine clay soils in the valley between Verner and Warren, and, although not a single habitation could be found along this section of the Veuve before the railroad was built, farms appeared in ever-increasing numbers after

the tracks had been advanced beyond the two stations. To-day the yellow clay soils of the Veuve Valley, especially between Verner and Warren, have been cleared to the edge of the enclosing rock ridges (Fig. 5), and the villages have become the centers of prosperous agricultural communities (See page 107, and the map, Fig. 18).

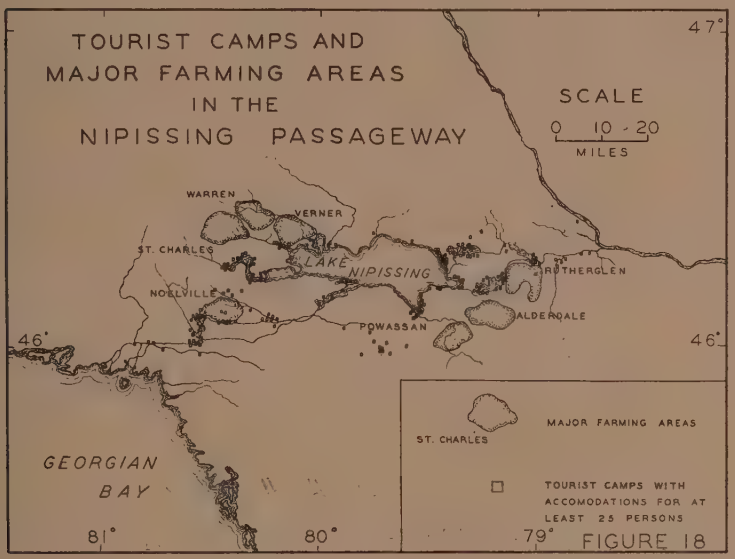

FIGURE 18

By the end of the railroad building period in 1891, a noticeable expansion of agricultural settlement had been started from the population centers established along the route of the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

The influence of the Canadian Pacific on colonization in the Nipissing Area, was supplemented by three additional route systems which were joined with it during the period of railroad building. The first of these was a system of wagon roads branching from the two main routes which were terminated at Mattawa and Nipissing Village during the lumbering period. Colonization roads were built by the Ontario government as a part of a colonization and settlement program instituted by the Dominion in 1868, a year after Confederation.

After the Canadian Pacific had been advanced through the Nipissing Passageway beyond the village of Warren, a system of wagon roads was gradually extended from the main settlements all along the route. By 1891 the modern road pattern had begun to take form.

The second route system which became associated with the Canadian Pacific line was created before 1880 when small sailing vessels carried settlers from the outlet of the South River across Lake Nipissing to its northern shores. In 1881 the first steamboat was launched on Lake Nipissing,[1] marking the beginning of a steamer service that has continued to the present day. By 1883 a steamboat was plying regularly between Nipissing Village, Sturgeon Falls, North Bay and Callander (Fig. 14).

As the settlements around Lake Nipissing increased, many of the colonists set out along its shores in sailing craft, rowboats, and canoes to search for new farmlands. In 1886, an adventurous pioneer named Monet, left Sturgeon Falls with a companion in a small boat to explore the western arm of Lake Nipissing. Passing along the southern bank of West Bay, they entered the mouth of the Amateewakea River, gliding slowly among its many islands, until they came to a low shelf of sloping rock, where they landed their boat to continue their explorations on foot. Travelling southward over rock ridges and low swales, through untouched forests of pine, birch, spruce, fir and cedar, they came at last to a high hill separating the drainage of the Amateewakea from that of the Wolseley River. On the summit of the hill, overlooking the valley of the Wolseley, the presence of large pine, maple, oak, and birch trees, on a deep deposit of yellow clay-loam soil, induced them to establish their farm. Near their pioneer farmstead, the village of Monetville later appeared, and in this way the settlement of the area southwest of Lake Nipissing was begun.

While the beginnings of agricultural colonization were being made along the western bays of Lake Nipissing, logging activities were expanding along the southern shores of the lake toward the French River. By 1885 a lumbering camp was established at Frank's Bay, one mile east of the French River. In the following year the small village which had grown around the camp, was connected by regular steamer service with Callander and Sturgeon Falls. Unlike the settlement at Monetville, from which an agricultural population expanded over areas of arable land around it, the village of Frank's Bay failed to become a center of population expansion. Twenty years after it came into existence, the sawmill was moved to Callander, and the village was soon deserted. All that remains of it to-day are the weed-covered foundations of its docks and buildings, near which summer cottages have been built.

West of Frank's Bay, along the French River, similar small lumbering villages appeared, at Hardy Bay, Chaudière Falls, and French River Harbor. Agricultural settlement failed to develop around all of these

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[1]Ontario. *Sessional Papers*, 1884, No. 4, Commissioner of Crown Lands Report for 1883, Appendix No. 29, p. 42.

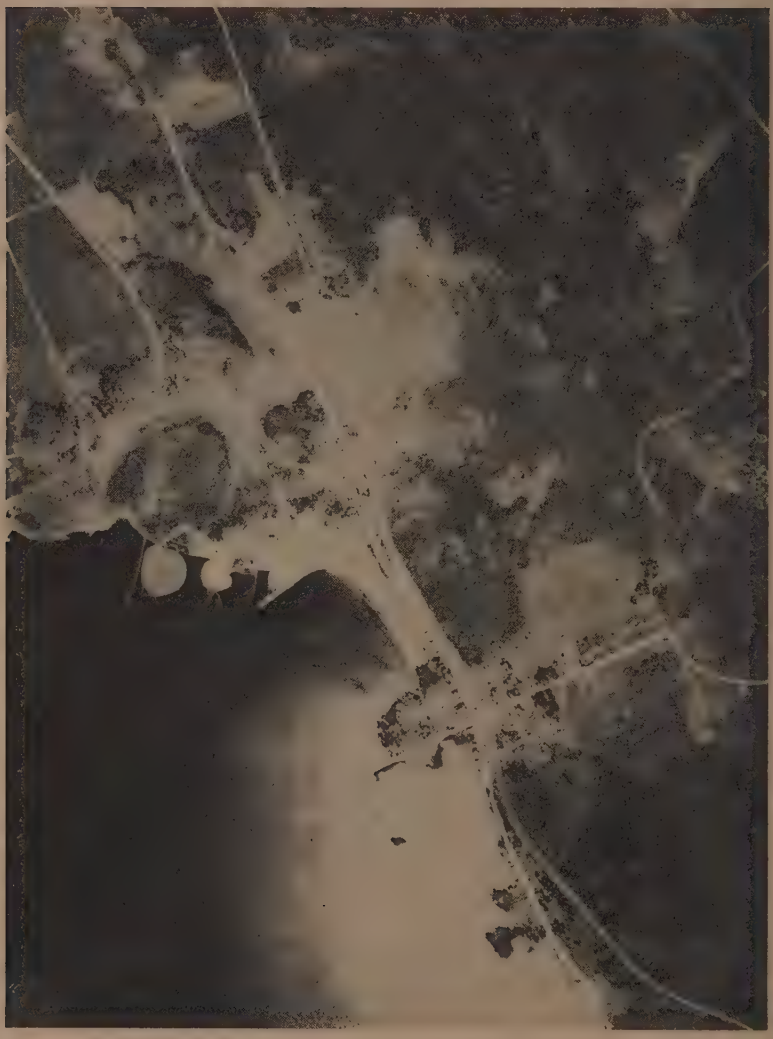
lumbering centers as well, and the reason for this is clearly expressed in the nature of the surrounding land. The land surface extending westward from Nipissing Village and Commanda to the shores of Georgian Bay, consists of an endless series of rock ridges and knobs, and low swales. It is a region drained by many interconnected lakes, streams, and marshes, and having only few patches of arable land suitable for farming (see map of modern farming areas, Fig. 18).

The third ancillary route system, in addition to wagon roads and steamer routes, was the Northern and Pacific Junction Railroad (later a part of the Canadian National Railroad) begun in 1884 at Gravenhurst, 100 miles south of Lake Nipissing, (Fig. 14). The tracks were laid northward across the uneven, forested surface of the Laurentian Plateau, rising slowly to an elevation of nearly 1200 feet above sea level, before descending gradually, through a portion of the Hill-Valley physiographic province (Fig. 4) toward Lake Nipissing.

A few miles south of Genesee Creek, a tributary of the South River, the railroad enters a broken expanse of land in which are many shallow, loam-filled valleys, bordered by low, rounded hills of bed rock (Fig. 8). On the south side of Genesee Creek a railroad station was built when the roadbed was laid, and the settlers soon erected pine cabins along the banks of the nearby stream. About two miles west of the station was the settlement of Powassan, founded in 1877 by pioneers from the swelling populations of Nipissing Village and Commanda (Fig. 14). The colonists were attracted to this site by the presence of a waterfall large enough to drive the wheels of the mills they planned to construct. By 1880 a store, post office and blacksmith shop had been added to the settlement, and in later years a power plant was erected at the falls.

After the Northern and Pacific Junction Railroad was completed, the post office, stores, and other establishments were moved to the vicinity of the railroad station, and the original colony on South River declined. Thus it was the railroad that determined the present location of the town of Powassan. To-day the thriving town of Powassan is the trading center of a large farming area (Fig. 18), extending southwestward up to the South River Valley, and eastward over the lands drained by the Wistawasing River and its tributaries.

Northward from Powassan, the Northern and Pacific Junction Railroad was advanced toward North Bay, reaching the settlements of Callander (Fig. 19), and Nipissing Junction by 1886. Owing to the scarcity of good soils around Callander, the village was never developed as an important agricultural center. During the railroad period, however, it became important as a depot for the shipment of supplies and construction materials by steamer across Lake Nipissing to the villages of Nipissing and Frank's Bay. It was not until several large lumber



RCAF Photograph

FIG. 19. Village of Callander. Line of the Northern and Pacific Junction Railroad passes close to the waterfront (lower right to upper left). Lumber yards and log booms of modern Callander's large sawmill appear at left center. Pier for steamers plying across Lake Nipissing in lower center. Center of village inland from the pier. North toward top. Scale: about 4 inches to the mile.

mills (Fig. 19), were built at Callander during the period of Settlement Expansion (see pages 108-109), that it became a busy and prosperous community.

The city of North Bay, where the terminal of the new railroad was established, experienced an appreciable increase in its population after the connection of the Northern and Pacific Junction Railroad with the Canadian Pacific in 1886. It had become a town of about 1850 people by 1891, and was destined to develop into the most important railroad center in northern Ontario during the following period, while it soon became the largest town in the Nipissing Area.

In the period of railroad building, 1881 to 1891, the main elements of present settlement in the Nipissing Passageway were established. By 1891 the population of the entire area had increased to five times what it had been a decade earlier. It has since expanded, from the centers existing in 1891, along lines of travel based upon the route systems laid out during the period.

SETTLEMENT EXPANSION—1891 TO 1949

By the end of the Railroad period in 1891, a growing demand for farm products at the lumbering villages and stopping-places along the railroads, had induced many colonists to begin cultivating scattered areas of fertile soils near the new settlements. During the period of Settlement Expansion that followed, the production of pulpwood and what is popularly called the tourist trade, became equally important in the economy of the Nipissing Area.

The distribution of population, and the location of the main roads and railroads for 1949 are shown on the map, Fig. 15. It is important to note that since 1891, a number of settlements, begun during the lumbering and railroad periods, have failed to survive. For example, French River Harbor, Frank's Bay, and Thornecliff were entirely depopulated many years ago.

Besides the major elements of land use,—farming, lumbering, pulpwood production, and the tourist trade,—the expansion of settlement has been connected with the railroad industry, which is centered at North Bay. The influence of these five leading factors provides a basis for the following discussion.

Since 1891 the number of farms has been increasing on the small patches of arable land in the Nipissing Area. As the land in farms spread farther from the population centers into the forests along the railroads, the Ontario government continued building wagon roads in

the newly-cleared territories. Road building was a part of the provincial colonization program, which included the offer of free or low cost land to settlers in northern Ontario. The program had been started when the Dominion government passed the Free Grant and Homestead Act of 1868.[1]

Encouraged by the offer of free or low cost land, and by the fact that the Canadian Pacific Railroad, in cooperation with the government, agreed to transport colonists to the frontier at reduced fares, settlers began taking up land in the Nipissing Area wherever a few acres of tillable soil could be found. In many cases, after the land had been cleared for plowing, it was discovered that the soils were too sandy, too poorly drained, or too stony to produce good crops. Such lands were soon abandoned and their owners moved to more promising areas, or sought employment in the towns and villages.

FIG. 20. This is the dwelling of an isolated farm on the south bank of the French River, about ten miles upstream from Georgian Bay. The land is used almost entirely for subsistence purposes. It is the only farm along the French River west of the Canadian Pacific Railroad (see Figure 15).

Not many years of pioneering had passed during the period of Settlement Expansion, before it was recognized that there were relatively few, scattered sections of fertile land in the area. These are the lands where the population has remained comparatively stable for the past twenty years. They have become the foundations of enduring settlements in the Nipissing Passageway.

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[1]Ontario. *Sessional Papers*, 1869, No. 22, Toronto, 1870, p. 2.

By 1930, after many years of experimenting with the possibilities of the land, the present pattern of farming areas in the Nipissing Passageway had been formed (Fig. 18). In each major area of good farmland a small village has become the community center, where a post office, church, general store, gasoline station and tavern are the principal components. The fertile areas are known throughout the Nipissing Passageway by the name of their community centers: Rutherglen, Alderdale, Powassan, Verner, Warren, St. Charles, and Noelville.

Farms on the areas of good land (Fig. 18) average between two and three hundred acres, and yield about fifty bushels of oats, and between two and three tons of timothy hay or red clover per acre. They are further distinguished by their well-kept buildings, and herds of cattle numbering about twenty head per farm (Fig. 6). Farms on the poorer lands average between one and two hundred acres, and the yield of oats is only about thirty bushels per acre, and about one and one-half tons of hay. Furthermore, while only about sixty per cent of the land on the better farms can be classed as arable, on the poorer lands the percentage is much less (Figs. 9 and 20).

Owing to the rocky, broken nature of the land, the scarcity of fertile soil, and the shortness of the growing season, farmers in the Nipissing Area have found that the rearing of dairy cattle is the most profitable use of the land. The main source of income is the sale of milk, cream and butter to local markets, and of cheese to the cities of southern Ontario and Quebec. The manufacture of cheese is a small industry which has grown up in the lands west of Lake Nipissing, where six small cheese factories have been established near St. Charles, Noelville, and LaVigne, each of which is operated by one man, with the part-time help of his family (Fig. 21).

Timothy hay, red clover, oats and barley, which grow well throughout the area, provide food for the cattle, and are often raised as cash crops on the larger, and more productive farms. Moreover, the widespread areas unfit for cultivation have been found useful as pasture for cattle, sheep, hogs, and horses. Sheep and hogs are kept almost entirely for local use however, although a sheep and lamb cooperative organization was created at Rutherglen in 1946 to encourage commercial sheep-rearing. In addition, a few farmers, occupying three or four hundred acres of good soil and grazing land, maintain small herds of beef cattle.

The soils of the Nipissing Area are slightly to moderately acidic, and consequently require the application of chemical fertilizers to attain more than a low degree of productivity. The crystalline bed rock of the Nipissing Area is almost entirely without lime, although a few deposits of marl have been found, and beds of crystalline limestone have been reported on the South River, McDonald's Island in Lake Nipissing, and

near Talon Chute on the Mattawa. Only farmers in the regions of good land, as in the vicinity of Alderdale, Verner, and Warren, can afford to pay for commercial fertilizer, as a general rule, and therefore most of the land is farmed without it. It has been found, however, that the acid soils in the Nipissing Area can produce good crops of potatoes, free from scab and other blights, and hence these, and other root crops are grown successfully. A few farmers with the specialized equipment necessary for commercial potato production, and large families to assist in the harvest, have begun to raise potatoes as a major cash crop, usually on the sandy soils along the periphery of an expanse of good farmland.

FIG. 21. A cheese factory at St. Charles. Cheese factories in the Nipissing Area are commonly small, frame buildings like the one shown here, in part of which the proprietor and his family live.

The lumbering industry, which had given the first impetus to widespread colonization in the Nipissing Passageway, has remained an important factor in settlement to the present day. The villages of Cache Bay and Callander became thriving lumbering towns during the period of Settlement Expansion, while Trout Mills and French River Harbor, for a short time, were also centers of lumber production. By 1908 there were three large mills at Cache Bay, two at Callander, one at Trout Mills, and one at French River Harbor.

Sawmills were built at the village of Cache Bay, because of its situation at the head of McLeod Bay, on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Timber cut on the west shores of Lake Nipissing and

along the Sturgeon River, was easily rafted on the lake into the protected waters of McLeod Bay (Fig. 10), where it was stored until needed at the mills. The lumber was shipped by rail eastward to the cities of southern Ontario, and westward to the growing settlements in the Prairie Provinces.

As the pine forests around Lake Nipissing became depleted in the two decades after 1908, lumbermen began exploring up the Sturgeon River for new sources of timber. The volume of lumber production gradually decreased, however, and by 1930 only one large mill was able to continue operations at Cache Bay. To-day this mill produces pine lumber, at a greatly diminished rate, from logs cut far up on the Sturgeon River in the vicinity of Lake Timagami.

Similar advantages of site and situation gave rise to the lumber mills at Callander and Trout Mills (Fig. 19). Depletion of the forests led to the decline of lumbering at both of these centers, however, resulting in the abandonment of the industry at Trout Mills in 1935, while only a single sawmill at Callander, now supplied entirely with logs driven down the Sturgeon River from Lake Timagami, is operating at a much reduced rate.

French River Harbor, near Georgian Bay (Fig. 3), was a small timber-shipping port in 1886,[1] having a variable population which was housed in a few frame dwellings during the summer months. By 1908 it had attained the status of a village, with a post office, two churches, two stores, one hotel, a large sawmill, and a population of 350.[2] The site of French River Harbor was unfavorable for settlement, however, for on every side were exposed rock ridges nearly bare of vegetation, sloping gradually beneath the waters of Georgian Bay, while the intervening depressions contained little or no soil. It is not surprising therefore, to learn, that when the pine forests that had supplied this village with timbers were depleted, its population declined rapidly and it soon became deserted. At present only the foundations of the mill, docks, and other structures remain, overgrown with birch, willow, poplar and cherry saplings.

Thus, of the large sawmills that once produced pine lumber in the Nipissing Area, only two remain, one at Cache Bay, and one at Callander (Fig. 22). The former settlements at Frank's Bay and French River Harbor have disappeared (compare the maps, Figs. 14 and 15), while the population centers of Cache Bay, Callander, and Trout Mills have remained. Cache Bay is the only one of these that is still exclusively a lumbering center. Callander is a lumbering village, but it has also

[1]Canada, Department of Mines and Resources, *Great Lakes Pilot, Lake Huron and Georgian Bay*, Ottawa, 1943, p. 235.

[2]Lovell, J., *Gazetteer of Canada*, Montreal, 1908, p. 481.

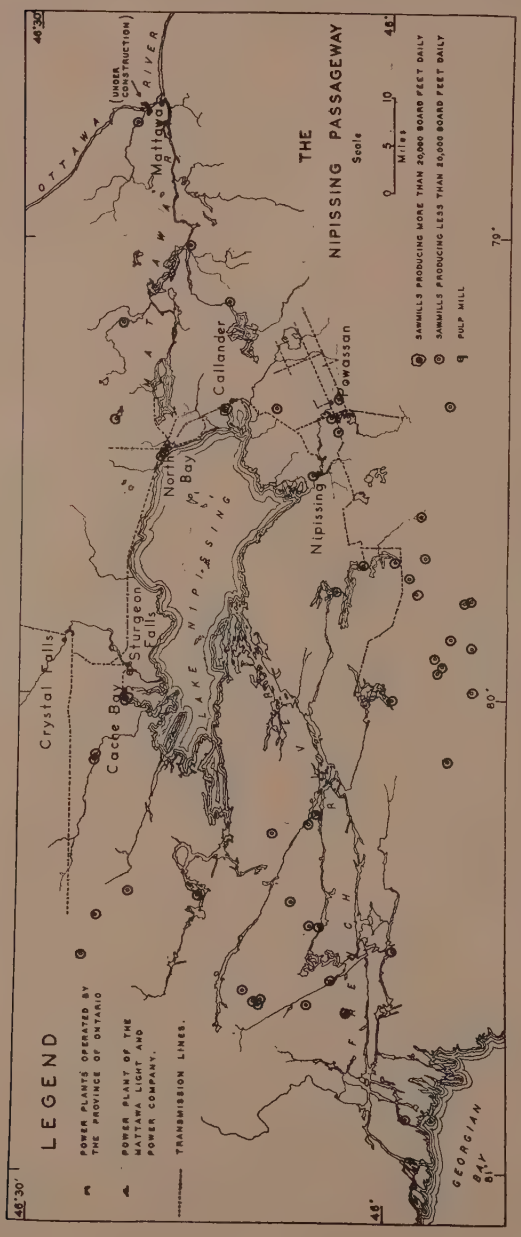


FIG. 22. Distribution of hydro power plants and transmission lines; pulp and saw mills, 1949.

become an important tourist center and a steamer terminal for small vessels travelling across Lake Nipissing to the summer resorts along the upper reaches of the French River. Trout Mills is at present a postal center for the farms, tourist camps, and summer homes along the north shore of Trout Lake, and has the only seaplane anchorage in the Nipissing Area.

In addition to the large mills around which communities have been developed, the small temporary sawmill has played an important part in the use of the land in the Nipissing Passageway. Since the earliest days of colonization, farmers have been able to supplement their incomes by cutting and hauling timber for the small sawmill operators. There are nearly fifty small sawmills in the vicinity of Lake Nipissing today, providing seasonal employment for a rather large number of men (Fig. 22).

Early in the period of Settlement Expansion, a new industry, the production of pulpwood, was introduced in the Nipissing Area when the construction of a pulpmill was begun at Sturgeon Falls in 1898(Fig. 17). The principal raw materials in wood pulp manufacture,—spruce, fir and hemlock trees, remained on the wide areas of cut-over land after lumbermen had removed the more valuable pine. The cutting of trees for the pulpmill became an important winter occupation for farmers and others engaged in seasonal work, as a means of supplementing their incomes. In addition, the new industry resulted in a substantial increase in the population of the town and the adjacent area.

Although pulpwood production, lumbering, and dairy farming have been the chief economic activities during most of the period of Settlement Expansion, still another industry, the tourist trade, has also become important. The Nipissing Area has been a popular vacation land for hunters and sport fishermen since the railroads were built during the 1880's. Small summer hotels and private cottages began to appear along the banks of Lake Nipissing, and the Mattawa and French Rivers, within a few years after the railroads were completed, for many visitors were attracted to these lands by the cool summer weather and an abundant supply of game and fish.[1]

The present importance of the recreation industry, however, has been the result of improved roads, and the widespread use of the automobile. Automobile travel in this section of Ontario became popular after 1934, when the famous Dionne quintuplets were born near Callander. The unusual sight of five, nearly identical infants, has since lured thousands of visitors into the area, and the provincial government, recognizing the value of good highways and tourist accommodations as a means of attracting regular vacationists, has been spending large sums of money

[1]Canadian Pacific Railroad, *Annotated Timetable*, Montreal, 1890, pp. 16, 17.

annually to resurface and improve the main highways leading into the Nipissing Area. Improved roads lead into remote and unpopulated areas, where the very sparsity of population, and the presence of moose, deer, bear, and wolves, have captured the fancy of summer travellers. The excellence of fishing,—for maskinonge, sturgeon, lake trout, bass and pike,—has become well-known to thousands of Canadian and American tourists.

To-day, many people earn a large part of their incomes in the tourist trade. The number of public camps has been increasing since the end of World War II, and there are now more than 200 tourist establishments in operation along the Mattawa River, Lake Nipissing, and the French River, many of which are shown on the map, Fig. 18.

The center of the recreation industry is at North Bay, a city of more than 18,057,[1] located on the northeast shore of Lake Nipissing. It is situated at the junction of the principal motor highways, railroads and airlines, which cross the Nipissing Passageway (Fig. 15). Although important as the center of the recreation industry, North Bay has become the largest urban community in the Nipissing Area chiefly because of its function as a railroad terminal.

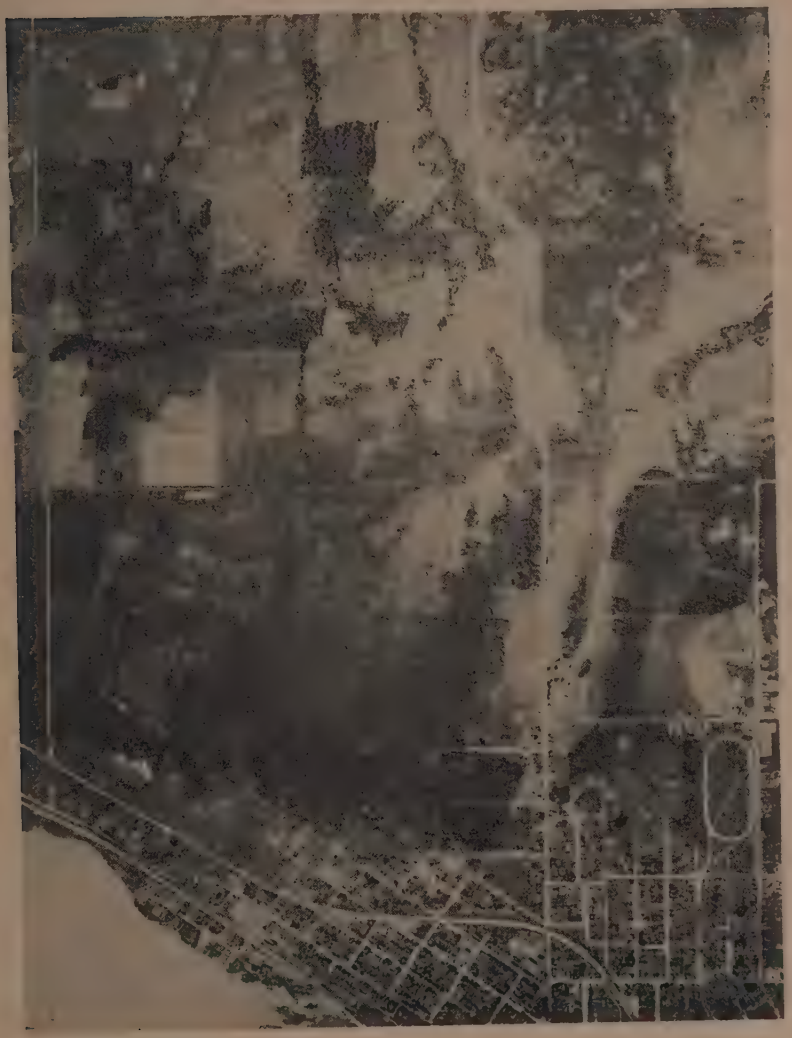
The most important railroad built in the Nipissing Area since 1891, is the Ontario Northland,[2] which was completed between North Bay and New Liskeard on Lake Temiskaming in 1904. It was later extended to Moosonee on James Bay, and became an important link between southern Ontario and the well-known Clay Belt of northern Ontario and Quebec. Although the establishment of its main offices, terminal yards, and repair sheds at North Bay has been an important factor in the growth of the city, the Ontario Northland has exerted little influence on the settlement of lands immediately north of the Nipissing Passageway, for it passes through lands where the soils are too thin, too sandy and too poorly drained for successful farming (see Figs. 15 and 18).

The completion in 1915 of a branch of the Canadian National Railroad from Ottawa, through North Bay to Capreol, north of Sudbury, added still further to the importance of North Bay as a railroad center. This was the last major rail line to be constructed in the Nipissing Passageway.

North Bay, metropolitan center of the Nipissing Area, is a small compact city, built close to the curving northeast shore of Lake Nipissing, in the midst of a vast, sparsely populated section. It has been built upon the rocky undulations of the Low Ridge and Knoll physiographic province (Fig. 4), and about a mile north of the city are the steeply rising slopes of the Hill-Valley province (Fig. 23). The population of

[1]North Bay Board of Trade estimate for 1949.

[2]Formerly the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railroad.



RCAF Photograph

FIG. 23. Northwest section of the city of North Bay. Lake Nipissing lower left. Chippewa Creek center right. The scarcity of good farm land around North Bay is indicated by the small number of farms appearing in the picture (see Figure 18). The sharply rising slopes of the Hill-Valley Province appear one mile (about 4 inches) north of the race track (lower right). The curving line of the Canadian National Railroad may be seen crossing the highway leading north to Cochrane. North toward top.

18,000 is housed mainly in modest frame dwellings distributed along streets which are mostly unpaved, and yet are arranged in an orderly, rectangular pattern. A large number of buildings rest upon solid gneiss and granite bed rock, out of which excavations have had to be blasted for basements, sewers, and water mains. Water is supplied from a reservoir fed by Trout Lake, and electricity is furnished by hydroelectric plants at Crystal Falls, Nipissing Village, and Powassan (Fig. 22).

A number of minor industries have been developed at North Bay, taking advantage of its situation as the hub of several important highways and railroads. The following list of some of these enterprises indicates, in part, the varied function performed by the city for the surrounding areas: fur-processing establishments, planing mills, mining equipment factories, a bronze foundry, two publishing houses, a frozen-food plant, radio station, airport, and several large hotels. Branch offices of the provincial government have been established here as well, making it the political capital of Nipissing District.

In addition to the railroads which have influenced the growth of North Bay since 1891, three other lines have been built in the Nipissing Passageway during the period of Settlement Expansion. At Mattawa, the Canadian Pacific constructed a bridge across the Ottawa River in 1895, connecting the main line with a short section of track leading to Lake Temiskaming, along the north shore of the Ottawa (Fig. 2). This railroad, called the Temiskaming Colonization Railroad, had been built in 1887 to carry settlers into northern Ontario and Quebec. After it was joined with the Canadian Pacific system, the village of Mattawa became a transfer point for passengers and freight transported northward by way of this branch. In 1908 the Canadian National[1] and Canadian Pacific Railroads completed lines between Toronto and Sudbury which cross the French River west of Lake Nipissing. They have had little effect upon settlement in the Nipissing Passageway, however, although every year vacationers travel by train to Pickerel and French River Stations, whence they proceed by boat to the tourist camps on the shores and islands of the French River and its tributaries (Fig. 18).

In the Nipissing Area several small industries have been established which manufacture products from locally available raw materials. At Mattawa, for example, there is a veneer plant, producing thin sheets of yellow birch and hemlock for processing into plywood. In 1946 a small spindle factory was begun at Mattawa, where stock for spools and chair rungs is made from white and yellow birch.

During the recent war a mica mine was opened about ten miles west

[1]Then the Canadian Northern Railroad.

of Mattawa, on the north side of the Mattawa River. The high cost and difficulty of extracting suitable crystals of mica from the pegmatite dikes in which they are found, caused the closing of the mine when the war ended. For a brief period, however, it had provided employment for a number of people at North Bay and Bonfield, in the processing of finished mica crystals. This has been the only successful mining development in the Nipissing Area, although other deposits of mica, and small quantities of gold, iron, and uranium-bearing ores have been reported in scattered localities.

Sturgeon Falls is the site of two cooperage factories, where barrel staves, kegs, and broom handles are manufactured from maple, and white and yellow birch trees. An abrasive manufacturing industry has been established here in recent years, where grindstones and other sharpening tools are made from garnetiferous rocks found farther up the Sturgeon River. The commercial fishing industry of Lake Nipissing is centered at Sturgeon Falls where two men make a living fishing for sturgeon, white fish, mullet, and suckers, in the waters between the mouth of the Sturgeon River and the Indian Reserve, five miles toward the east.

On the west side of Sturgeon Falls there is a small mink farm, one of several fur farms in the Nipissing Area. The others are chiefly fox farms, however, at such widely scattered places, as Monetville, North Bay, and Redbridge (see Fig. 15 for locations). Most of the furs produced in the Nipissing Passageway however, are obtained by trappers during the winter months, for the woods and waters of this territory are not yet depleted of the fur-bearing animals which first attracted the French traders in the early years of the 17th century.

Electricity is produced in the region by five hydro-electric power plants, four of which (one at Crystal Falls, two at Powassan, and one at Nipissing Village), are controlled by the Province of Ontario, while the fifth, near Mattawa, is privately owned (Fig. 22). Electric power is furnished mainly to the large population centers of North Bay, Sturgeon Falls, Mattawa, and Powassan, the tourist and lumbering area west of Powassan, and the farming section around Alderdale. In most of the rural areas, however, as suggested on the map, Fig. 22, the farms are lighted only by oil or gas lamps.

Thus, in the Nipissing Area, a number of minor industries, based upon its natural resources, form an essential part of the local economy. With the major industries,—dairy farming, lumbering, pulpwood production, and the tourist trade,—they make up the economic structure upon which the present population of the Nipissing Passageway is founded.

SUMMARY

Over three hundred years ago, when Brulé, LeCaron and Champlain bravely ventured up the Ottawa and through the Nipissing Passageway, they saw only a few bark wigwams along the French River and the shores of Lake Nipissing. Then, for more than two hundred years, explorers, fur traders and missionaries travelled along the Mattawa, Lake Nipissing, and the French. By 1825, however, these waters had ceased to be an important canoe route. At that time only two small Hudson's Bay Company trading posts, and a few Indian wigwams occupied the lands of the area.

The Canadian Shield, traversed by the Nipissing Passageway, resisted the advance of colonization for many years after the decline of the fur trade. At last, however, as the lumbering industry and the building of railroads attracted men from southern Ontario and Quebec into the forested wilderness, settlements began to appear on the banks of its lakes and rivers. By 1891 the beginnings of enduring settlement along the famous canoe route had been made.

To-day the Nipissing Passageway, once inhabited only by a few Indians, has a population of more than 50,000, occupying farms, villages, and towns, and is traversed by well-travelled motor roads and railroads. Its small scattered patches of arable land are mainly devoted to the rearing of dairy cattle, and the raising of hay, oats, and potatoes, while its wooded hills provide timber for lumber and pulp mills. The tourist trade, based upon the lure of cool summer weather, deep forests, and numerous lakes and rivers, is rapidly becoming important, for hunters and fishermen now roam the woods and waters which once were the hunting grounds of Indians and coureur-de-bois.

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TABLE I

AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURES AT FOUR STATIONS IN THE NIPISSING AREA[1]

	Crystal Falls	North Bay	Rutherglen	Calvin
	F°	F°	F°	F°
January	8.6	11.5	8.5	7.8
February	7.8	11.7	9.4	9.7
March	21.0	23.7	22.0	10.9
April	35.0	37.9	37.8	39.0
May	49.0	51.0	51.4	52.2
June	58.9	61.6	60.4	61.5
July	63.2	67.0	65.0	65.6
August	60.7	64.8	61.6	61.7
September	53.2	56.2	54.4	55.4
October	41.4	42.6	42.6	42.7
November	28.9	31.1	29.4	29.9
December	15.1	15.7	14.2	13.6

[1]Sources: *Dominion of Canada*, Meteorological Division of Air Services, Monthly Record of Meteorological Observations. Toronto 1875-1944. STUPART, R. F., *The Climate of Northern Ontario*, in Transactions of the Canadian Institute, Vol. IX, 1911, pp. 149-152.

TABLE II

AVERAGE MONTHLY PRECIPITATION AT FOUR STATIONS IN THE NIPISSING AREA[1]

	Crystal Falls	North Bay	Rutherglen	Calvin
	Inches	Inches	Inches	Inches
January	2.89	2.11	2.08	2.13
February	1.97	1.48	1.92	1.77
March	2.06	1.69	1.88	2.07
April	2.08	1.55	1.66	1.45
May	2.31	2.40	2.79	3.04
June	3.54	3.06	2.87	3.20
July	3.81	2.16	3.43	3.47
August	2.34	2.41	3.01	3.04
September	4.23	3.71	3.55	3.25
October	4.13	3.33	2.90	2.66
November	3.30	2.72	2.45	2.42
December	2.51	1.99	2.06	2.26
YEAR	35.17	28.61	30.60	30.76

[1]Sources: *Dominion of Canada*, Meteorological Division of Air Services, Monthly Record of Meteorological Observations. Toronto, 1875-1944. STUPART, R. F., *The Climate of Northern Ontario*, in Transactions of the Canadian Institute, Vol. IX, 1911, pp. 149-152.

TABLE III

OCCURRENCE OF FIRST AND LAST FROSTS AT THREE STATIONS IN THE NIPISSING AREA, DURING THE TEN-YEAR PERIOD FROM 1930 TO 1939[1]

	Crystal Falls		North Bay		Rutherglen	
	Last	First	Last	First	Last	First
1930	May 30	Sept. 5	May 30	Oct. 4	May 31	Sept. 9
1931	June 1	Sept. 25	May 17	Sept. 25	June 1	Sept. 19
1932	May 28	Sept. 9	May 29	Sept. 30	May 29	Sept. 10
1933	May 14	Sept. 10	May 15	Sept. 10	May 15	Sept. 11
1934	June 7	Aug. 22	May 25	Oct. 1	June 8	Aug. 28
1935	May 31	Aug. 23	May 21	Sept. 23	June 9	Aug. 24
1936	May 30	Aug. 31	May 21	Sept. 25	May 31	Aug. 26
1937	June 30	Aug. 31	May 14	Oct. 8	June 2	Sept. 5
1938	May 24	Sept. 1	May 25	Oct. 2	May 25	Sept. 2
1939	May 21	Sept. 6	May 18	Sept. 24	May 20	Sept. 6
AVERAGE	May 29	Sept. 2	May 22	Sept. 27	May 30	Sept. 5

[1]Dominion of Canada, Meteorological Division of Air Services, *Monthly Record of Meteorological Observations*, Toronto, 1931-1940.